



# **Economic and Social Council**

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## **Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights**

### **Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under articles 16 and 17 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights**

**Second periodic reports of States parties due in 2009**

**Greece\***

[31 August 2012]

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\* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

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## **I. Introduction**

1. The present periodic report focuses on the concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, adopted on 14 May 2004 and published on 7 June 2004 (E/C.12/1/Add.97) and covers a wide range of additional developments in the field of economic, social and cultural rights during the last years. We would like to recall that the Government of Greece submitted on 21 July 2004 a number of comments, both of a general character and on specific paragraphs of the abovementioned concluding observations (E/C.12/2004/8, 19.8.2004).

2. The drafting of the report was coordinated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in close cooperation with all Ministries involved in the promotion and protection of economic, social and cultural rights. The draft report was submitted to the National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR), in which six major NGOs participate; the views of the NCHR have been duly taken into consideration in view of the finalization of the report.

3. Greece is amidst a challenging economic and financial situation. Since 2010, the euro area Member States of the EU have been providing stability support to Greece, in conjunction with multilateral assistance provided by the International Monetary Fund. Within this framework, the Government has been implementing measures of fiscal adjustment, covering wide sectors of the social and economic life of the country, such as employment, health sector, social security, etc. Inevitably, the above measures have a profound impact on the enjoyment of a number of economic and social rights. The policies pursued by the Government, however, are necessary in order to safeguard the “social welfare state”, under threat from the dire situation of public finances. Our major challenge is to establish an adequate safety net against poverty and social exclusion, particularly for the next few years, through the adoption of targeted measures benefiting those at risk of poverty so as to limit the impact of the crisis. The “social safety net” against social exclusion, includes access to basic services, such as medical care, housing and education. The measures taken by the Government aim at leading the country back to the path of sustainable economic growth, promoting the enjoyment of economic and social rights for all.

## **II. Reporting on the substantive provisions**

### **Article 2 – Progressive realization of rights**

#### **1. Anti-discrimination legislation**

4. In 2005, Parliament adopted Law 3304/2005 on the “Implementation of the principle of equal treatment regardless of racial or ethnic origin, religious or other beliefs, disability, age or sexual orientation”, which incorporates two relevant EU directives (2000/43/EC dated 29 June 2000, and 2000/78/EC dated 27 November 2000). The aim of the Law is to lay down a general regulatory framework for combating discrimination in a wide variety of fields and to designate or establish bodies for protecting, promoting and monitoring compliance with the principle of non-discrimination.

5. The Law prohibits both direct and indirect discrimination, as well as “harassment” and confirms that “special measures” and “positive action” are in conformity with the principle of equal treatment. Other provisions are devoted to the protection of victims of discrimination and provide for, inter alia, the shift of the burden of proof (with the exception of criminal procedures) and the protection of the complainant against victimization.

6. As regards, in particular, the principle of equal treatment regardless of racial or ethnic origin, the scope of the relevant Chapter II of the Law is very wide. Its provisions apply to all persons, as regards both the public and private sectors, in relation to: (a) conditions of access to employment and to occupation in general, including selection criteria and recruitment conditions, (b) access to all types of vocational guidance, training, retraining and practical work experience, (c) employment and working conditions, including dismissals and pay, (d) participation to an organization of workers or employers or any other professional organization, (e) social protection, including social security and health care, (f) social advantages, (g) education, (h) access to and supply of goods and services which are made available to the public, including housing.

7. Chapter III of the Law on the principle of equal treatment regardless of religious or other beliefs, disability, age or sexual orientation follows the same general principles and pattern as Chapter II, but has a more limited scope, since it applies in the areas of employment and occupation and covers cases (a) to (d) referred to here above. There are also specific provisions on occupational requirements (Article 9), reasonable accommodation for disabled persons (Article 10) and justification of differences of treatment on grounds of age (Article 11).

8. It is, however, to be noted that the protection afforded against discrimination on the grounds of religious or other beliefs, disability, age or sexual orientation may be extended, by virtue of a Presidential decree, into areas other than those of employment and occupation (Article 27).

9. A most important aspect of Law 3304/2005 is the establishment or designation of the following bodies for the promotion of equal treatment.

10. The Office of the Ombudsman examines complaints for alleged violations of the principle of equal treatment by services of: (a) the public sector, (b) local and regional authorities, (c) other public bodies, state private law entities, public corporations, local government enterprises and undertakings whose management is directly or indirectly determined by the state by means of an administrative decision or as a shareholder. In fulfilling this task, the Office of the Ombudsman has an expanded scope of action.

11. The Committee for Equal Treatment (CET), a body established in the Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights, subject directly to the Minister, examines violations of the principle of equal treatment by natural and legal persons, other than those which fall within the competence of the Office of the Ombudsman or the Labor Inspectorate.

12. The Labor Inspectorate (SEPE) takes up cases of alleged discrimination in the fields of occupation and employment, other than those falling within the competence of the Office of the Ombudsman. SEPE can conduct investigations or controls and also impose administrative sanctions and lodge a complaint in case of violation of criminal law provisions. According to Article 2 of Law 3996/05-08-2011 "Reformation of the Labour Inspectorate, regulations of social security issues and other provisions", SEPE examines violations of the principle of equal treatment between men and women at work and in employment regardless of ethnic or racial origin, religious or other beliefs, disability, age or sexual orientation, taking into consideration cases of multiple discrimination as well. Implementing article 10 of Law 3304/2005, SEPE also examines cases of discrimination against persons with disability, including persons with HIV.

13. The NCHR has pointed out deficiencies in the relevant legislative framework. It is true that Law 3304/2005 has not developed its full potential yet, with regard to the monitoring of its implementation. The number of complaints submitted is small and confined mainly to the public sector, falling under the competence of the Office of the Ombudsman. It is, however, to be stressed that both the Greek Ombudsman, as an

independent authority, and the Labor Inspectorate handle in an effective manner an important number of cases, under their respective general legislative framework, which are closely linked to the fight against all forms of discrimination.

Table 1

Year	Inspections and reinspections	Sanctions			Labour disputes (conciliation procedure)		
		Complaints	Imposed fines	Imposed fines in amounts (euros)	Labour disputes	Resolved labour disputes	Paid amounts (euros)
2005	29.646	2.390	5.161	5.346.170	16.378	7.974	9.492.008
2006	31.630	2.311	5.133	10.639.176	15.510	7.586	9.473.760
2007	35.805	2.126	5.724	11.803.786	15.123	7.102	10.453.543
2008	28.538	2.280	5.440	9.814.500	15.898	7.698	11.188.804
2009	28.082	3.475	5.679	10.885.952	20.550	10.039	17.524.702
2010	30.965	3.585	7.165	13.144.900	20.555	9.435	20.699.232
2011	31.515	4.003	3.738	10.937.438	21.345	9.843	19.875.037
<b>Total</b>	<b>216.181</b>	<b>20.170</b>	<b>38.040</b>	<b>72.571.922</b>	<b>125.359</b>	<b>59.677</b>	<b>98.707.086</b>

14. It is also to be noted that the European Community Initiative EQUAL dedicated a measure to combating phenomena of racism and xenophobia and promoting a diverse society. To this end, legal assistance and support actions for persons suffering from racism are enhanced, in order to enable them to assert their legal rights regarding salary, working conditions, social security, and recognition of professional qualifications. A significant part of the actions of the Community Initiative EQUAL is intended for raising awareness of the general public and opinion leaders, social partners and bodies. This measure has a total budget of 12,429,206€ (public expenditure). The payments effected until 15-08-2008 amounted to 11,224,028.18€, that is, the absorption capacity has reached 90%, while the beneficiaries amounted to 11,309 persons.

## 2. Guarantee of economic, social and cultural rights to non-citizens (paras. 12 and 33 of the Committee's concluding observations)

15. As already explained in Greece's comments to the Committee's concluding observations, the Greek Constitution, in the cases where the enjoyment of some economic, social and cultural rights is reserved to Greek citizens, does not prohibit the exercise of the said rights by foreigners, but it refers instead the relevant matters to the legislator. In any case, the legislator is bound to take into account and to fully respect and implement the constitutional provisions relating to the protection of human dignity (Article 2) and the protection of life, honour and freedom of all persons living within Greek territory, without making any distinction whatsoever as to citizenship (Article 5, para. 2), as well as international treaties on the protection of human rights to the extent that these treaties do not make any distinction between nationals and foreigners.

16. Furthermore, in accordance with Article 4 of the Civil Code, a foreign national enjoys the same civil rights that are accorded to Greek citizens. In the same vein, foreign nationals who are holders of a residence permit enjoy the same labour rights and have the same obligations as Greek workers relating to remuneration, working terms and conditions, their social security rights and other financial obligations prescribed by the legislation in force.

17. It is significant that, in the framework of the revision of the Greek Constitution, neither the NGO community nor constitutional lawyers or other actors of the civil society raised the above issue.

18. With regard to the right to free education mentioned by the Committee, it is to be noted that foreign students enjoy the right to free education in the same way as Greek citizens do. Moreover, every child living in Greece is entitled to education regardless of their parent's / guardian's legal status in the country. In view of the above, the issue of the guarantee of economic, social and cultural rights to non-citizens should be examined in the light not only of the text of the relevant constitutional provisions but also of firmly established Greek law and practice in this field, under the applicable international human rights treaties.

### **3. Rights of migrants**

19. All persons legally residing in Greece enjoy the same social security rights as Greek nationals, the right to social protection, equal access to services provided by public agencies or entities, local government organizations and public utilities and the right to be admitted in public hospitals and clinics. Furthermore, Greek legislation sets out the conditions for obtaining the long-term resident status, which further extends equal treatment with nationals. At the same time, access to emergency care in hospitals is available to third-country nationals regardless of their residence status. Children who are non-nationals have access to health care institutions, regardless of their residence status or that of their parent. Enrolment to public schools of children of refugees, asylum seekers and foreign citizens whose legal residence status is still pending is possible even in the absence of complete documentation.

20. The administrative reform implemented through the Kallikratis Program (Law 3852/2010, article 78) provides for the establishment of Migrant Integration Councils (MIC) within the territorial limits of municipalities. Their role consists in identifying integration problems encountered by third country nationals and subsequently submitting relevant proposals for the smooth integration of local migrant populations. The Migrant Integration Councils (MIC) are composed of municipal counselors, representatives from local immigrant communities and members of other social entities. During the last few months, 136 Migrant Integration Councils (MIC) have been established all around the country including the big urban centers of Greece, such as Athens and Thessaloniki. Their establishment and everyday running has been supported by actions taken in the context of the European Integration Fund of third country nationals (EIF).

21. Law 3838/2010 provides for the first time legally residing immigrants and foreign nationals of Greek origin with the right to vote and stand for election at local elections. Furthermore, the same Law introduces, *inter alia*, new provisions on the acquisition of Greek citizenship. The most important innovations include: (a) the acquisition of the Greek citizenship by birth for third generation immigrants, (b) the right for second generation immigrants to acquire the citizenship either by birth, or after having successfully attended six years in the Greek educational system. During the last year, Special Committees for the Acquisition of Greek Citizenship have been established in order to examine the high volumes of applications and already more than 1000 second and third generation migrants have become Greek citizens. However, it has to be noted that Law 3838/2012 has been judged as unconstitutional by the Fourth Section of the Council of the State and a final decision is expected to be concluded by the Council of State's Grand Chamber.

22. In accordance with the provisions of Regulation 1030/2002/EC, as amended by Regulation 380/2008/EC, Greek authorities are obliged to issue residence permits in the format of a separate document (electronic card). Following to this and in the framework of the recent comprehensive efforts of the Hellenic government to reform its administrative

structure in order to provide best quality services to citizens, Law 4018/2011 titled “Re-organization of the system for the issuance of aliens’ residence permits under increased security and other provisions falling under the competence of Ministry of Interior” has been adopted. The new law includes provisions that simplify, among others, the legal framework for the entry and residence of third country nationals and accelerate the procedures on the one hand, and, on the other hand, promote the gradual transformation of the migration authorities to “one stop shops”(this is related to the implementation of the residence permit, as an electronic card) for immigrants in the seat of each decentralized authority (ex-prefecture) of the country providing faster procedures and efficient services. This innovative amendment is expected to reduce, drastically, the period of time required for issuing residence permits. At this stage a number of “one-stop shops” are in operation.

23. Also, in the framework of the above mentioned Law, the Greek Parliament adopted provisions on the simplification of the procedure for the entry and temporary residence of third country nationals, as seasonal workers.

24. Joint Ministerial Decision 15055/546/2011 reduced the minimum necessary number of working days and insurance days for third country nationals, as a requirement for the renewal of the residence permit for work. As a result, third-country nationals can renew their stay permit under more favorable conditions, thus they can be more easily integrated in the labour market of our country and secure their labour and insurance rights. More specifically, the Joint Ministerial Decision reduces the insurance days that are necessary for the renewal of the stay permit from 200 to 120 per year or to 240 per biennium.

25. In relation to migrant integration, the Greek Government has drafted a National Strategy for the Integration of third country nationals. The Strategy revolves around the following policy areas: Information Services, Education and Greek Language Courses, Employment and Vocational Training, Health, Housing/ Quality of Life, Civic Participation, Equal Treatment, Intercultural Coexistence, Targeted Social Groups and Planning and Evaluation of Social Integration Programmes. The draft aims to bring together and coordinate all agencies that are involved with migrant integration. This draft will form the basis for an extensive process of consultation, which will take place both with governmental and non-governmental agencies. After consultation, the National Strategy will provide the main directions and objectives for the integration of migrants in the country.

26. Finally, a number of actions have recently been implemented within the context of the European Integration Fund’s 2009 Annual Programme.

#### **4. Rights of persons belonging to minorities (paras. 10, 29, 31, 51 of the Committee’s concluding observations)**

27. The protection of the rights of persons belonging to minorities forms an integral part of the international protection of human rights. For this reason, Greek legislation, policy and practice on minority issues are oriented towards the strict implementation of modern human rights standards to the benefit of members of such groups.

28. Within this framework, any person who claims to belong to a distinct ethnic or cultural group is free to do so, with no negative consequences deriving from such a choice. However, such subjective claims or perceptions of a small number of persons, which are not based on objective facts and criteria, are not sufficient by themselves to impose to a State an obligation to officially recognize a group as a minority and to provide to its members specific minority rights, additional to those guaranteed by human rights treaties. This view is fully in line with the approach adopted in the context of modern human rights treaties in the field of minority protection, according to which the individual’s subjective choice is inseparably linked to objective criteria relevant to that person’s identity.

Furthermore, according to the same standards, all ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious differences do not necessarily lead to the creation of national, or, for that matter, ethnic minorities (these principles are well reflected in the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities of the Council of Europe).

29. Greece has repeatedly stated that it officially recognizes the existence of only one minority in Greece, namely the Muslim minority in Thrace. Further to fully complying with the relevant provisions of the 1923 Lausanne Treaty, Greek policy and legislation reflect and implement contemporary human rights norms and standards, as well as the European Union *acquis*, aimed at improving the living conditions of the members of this minority and their smooth integration into all aspects of both local and national society. Other groups living on the Greek territory have not been identified as “minorities”, since they do not meet the objective criteria which are well defined in international law for their identification as minority groups. However, persons belonging to such groups are fully entitled to enjoy economic, social and cultural rights as any other person living in the country, regardless of whether they have been granted the status of “minorities”.

30. Greece recognizes that the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities has proved to be an extremely useful tool in the effort of Council of Europe Member States to ensure the protection and promotion of the rights of persons belonging to minorities. It has been ratified by the vast majority of Council of Europe Member States (39 out of 47 Member States). It is, however, to be noted that States have at their disposal a variety of ways and means to ensure protection of the rights of persons belonging to minority groups. The implementation of minority rights instruments requires legal and political assessments and choices as to what forms and modalities such implementation should take, depending on particular national circumstances. In our view, the non-ratification of the Framework Convention has not led to the emergence of a “protection gap” in the field of application of the ICESCR, nor has impeded the full enjoyment by Greek citizens of all rights enshrined in the Covenant.

## **5. Development cooperation**

31. In 2009, Greece allocated 0,19% of its Gross National Income to Official Development Assistance (ODA) to developing countries. The amount of development assistance is allocated to bilateral development assistance activities, multilateral development assistance and development programmes undertaken and implemented by Greek NGOs in developing countries. Greece has intervened in many cases of natural or man-made disasters, so as not only to provide emergency relief, but also to contribute in guaranteeing the rights of the affected persons to life, adequate food, housing, water and health. In particular, Greece is strongly engaged in combating climate change effects, through, *inter alia*, a human rights perspective. During the Greek Chairmanship of the Human Security Network (May 2007-May 2008), Greece undertook a number of initiatives to highlight the impact of climate change on the enjoyment of the rights of vulnerable population groups.

## **Article 3 – Non-discrimination and equality**

### **1. Representation of women at decision-making levels (paras. 13 and 34 of the Committee’s concluding observations)**

32. The relevant data are as follows:

- Hellenic Parliament (data 2012)

58 Women MPs out of 300 seats in total (percentage 19.3%)



- Government (data 2010)

Out of the 49 Members of the Cabinet (including the Prime Minister), there were 3 women Ministers, and 7 women Deputy Ministers.

- Local Government (data 2011)

In the Regional Councils 115 women were elected out of 713 seats in total (percentage 16.13%), while 11 Deputy Heads of Regions are women.

There are 8 women Mayors in a total of 325 Mayors

Municipal Councils: 1558 women were elected out of 9694 seats in total (percentage 16.07%).

- Judiciary (data 2010)

Total number of Judges of all levels by gender: 2.428 Women, 1.245 Men

In addition, 3 Vice-Presidents at the Council of State (Supreme Administrative Court) are women. Since July 2011, the Supreme Court has been presided by a woman.

- Academic Community (Staff) – Data 2008-9

Tertiary Education Institutions: 4.232 Women, 8.826 Men

Tertiary Technological Education Institutions: 4.143 Women, 6.739 Men

## 2. Measures to increase the level of representation of women at all decision-making levels (para. 34 of the Committee's concluding observations)

33. Legislative provisions have been enacted to increase the level of representation of women at all decision-making levels, such as the establishment of a 1/3 minimum quota for either gender on the electoral lists for local and parliamentary elections, in collective bodies and service councils of the public administration, public legal entities and local authorities, as well as in the composition of national organs and committees of research and technology. At the same time, quotas unfavorable to women regarding their admission in the Police and Fire Brigades Academies have been abolished.

34. Several actions have been implemented or are envisaged in the National Action Plan for Substantive Gender Equality 2010-2013, with a view to strengthening women's participation in decision-making. More specifically, since 2005, a number of information and awareness-raising campaigns have been organized. In 2010, a special emphasis was placed on the promotion of women in regional and municipal elections and the integration of gender in the policies of local government in the context of the "Kallikratis" Programme. The promotion of women in decision-making and civil society is one of the thematic fields of public policy incorporated in the National Action Plan for Substantive Gender Equality for the period 2010-2013. The relevant actions include support of women, both candidate and elected to public office, support of women in election campaigns, creation of offices or committees for women or gender equality, strengthening of the networking of women in secondary and higher education organizations as well as organizations of social partners, close cooperation with women's NGOs, etc. In addition, in each of the 13 Regions of Greece a Regional Equality Committee with a consultative status has been established within the context of the new architectural structure of decentralized administration and local government.

## 3. Gender equality in general

35. Greece's National Programme for Substantive Gender Equality is built around three pillars: improvement, enhancement and implementation of legislation, special policies for

gender equality and gender mainstreaming. In the context of the above mentioned Programme, the following actions in brief have been implemented (indicative reference):

(a) *Gender policies*

- (i) Creation and operation of a comprehensive structure for prevention, combating and support of victims of gender-based violence throughout the country (Counseling Centers and Shelters included) as clearly depicted at the National Action Plan on Violence against Women 2009-2013, which has been incorporated in the National Programme for Substantive Gender Equality 2010-2013);
- (ii) Operation of the bilingual (Greek and English) telephone line SOS 15900 for the support of victims of gender-based violence. The line operates on a 24- hour basis / 365 days per year and offers specialized information and counseling services to women – victims of all forms of violence (domestic violence, rape, sexual harassment, trafficking in human beings);
- (iii) Creation of a Structure of Monitoring Policies on Gender Equality through the establishment of a specialized Mechanism / Observatory, aiming at the supervision and monitoring of gender equality in all public policies, as well as gender impact assessment and gender mainstreaming in public administration and local government;
- (iv) Support of Women's Organizations and NGOs specialized in gender equality and the protection of human rights for the elaboration and implementation of Action Plans in favor of gender equality for a duration of two years;
- (v) Elaboration of a Manual for the professionals dealing with refugees, aiming at the protection of female refugees. This Manual was compiled by the General Secretariat for Gender Equality in cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees;
- (vi) Upgrading of the services offered by the Library of Equality and Gender Issues / General Secretariat for Gender Equality through digitalization and adoption of advanced information systems;
- (vii) Implementation of a specific Project by OAED (the Manpower Employment Organization) aiming at the promotion of female entrepreneurship for 4,000 unemployed women aged 22-64. The maximum public cost of the Project, initiated by the competent Ministry of Labor and Social Protection has been estimated to 96,000,000 euros;
- (viii) Financial support of employed mothers, depending on their income, whose children attend kindergartens through the offer of special coupons/vouchers by the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection;
- (ix) National Campaign for information and sensitization of the public on violence against women. The emphasis has been put on the operation of the telephone line SOS 15900 through the social message "You are not the only one. You are not alone";

(b) *Gender mainstreaming*

- (i) Civil servant gender equality training and awareness raising: The National Center for Public Administration and Local Government organizes relevant seminars for civil servants. Similar seminars are organized for members of the judicial corps, the diplomatic corps, the police and administrators of the local government;
- (ii) Gender mainstreaming for public policies: Design and standardization of a Gender Mainstreaming System in public policies (central, regional, local);

(iii) Gender mainstreaming in public policies monitoring structure: the preparation and development of the basic infrastructure of the Gender Equality Monitoring Structure as well as development and operation of the necessary information infrastructures and systems are under way. Its objective, once it is established, is to monitor all public policies through the use of indices and on the basis of the Beijing Platform of Action.

## **Article 6 – Right to work**

### **1. Employment in rural areas (para. 14 of the Committee’s concluding observations)**

36. The Greek government considers the rural economy as leverage in the national economy and applies policies to prevent internal migration to the cities by providing cultural life, access to basic services such as health and educational services and also opportunities for recreational activities in the countryside. The Ministry of Rural Development and Food has passed over the last years legislation concerning the shaping of agricultural cooperatives of different degrees depending on the size of the population. There are also opportunities for women to manage some cooperatives or developing economic activities, like food processing, traditional handicrafts etc., making a vital contribution to the local economy.

### **2. Statistical data on employment (para. 35 of the Committee’s concluding observations)**

#### **(a) Labour force**

37. According to the Hellenic Statistical Authority (EL.STAT.), the Labour Force (ages 15+) in Greece included 4,967,625 persons in the year of 2011 [that is, 2,870,375 men (or 57.8% of the total) and 2,097,250 women or 42.2% of the total], exhibiting a decline of 1% against the 2010 figure (see Statistical Annex for Article 6 – Annex 1, table 1A).

38. Turning to the activity rate for people in the 15-64 age group (i.e. share of employed and unemployed in the 15-64 age group as a proportion of total population in the same age group), we observe that it settled at 67.7% in 2011, lower from the 2010-level of 68.2%, as well as reversing a previous uptrend in the 2001-2010 period. Moreover, the activity rate (ages 15-64) of women in 2011 is much lower than the activity rate of men in 2011 (see Statistical Annex for Article 6 – Annex 1, Table 1B).

#### **(b) Employment**

39. As for employment, 4,090,700 persons aged above 15 years were employed in 2011, [2,441,475 men or 59.7% of the total and 1,649,250 women or 40.3% of the total]. The average number of employed people (ages 15+) declined by 6.8% in 2011 year-on-year, following a decline of 2.7% in 2010. We note that the total number of employed people (ages 15+) in the 4th quarter of 2011 declined below the 4 million people level, to 3.93 million people, for the first time since the 2nd quarter of 1998. Employment in 2011 declined in almost all economic sectors, however recession particularly affected cyclical sectors, such as construction, manufacturing and trade. Employed people (in the 15-74 age group) reached 3,892.0 thousand in January 2012 and 3,872.2 thousand in February 2012 (seasonally adjusted figures) (see Statistical Annex for Article 6 – Annex 1, Table 2A).

40. As a result of the above developments, the employment rate for the 15-64 age group settled at 55.6% in 2011, that is, lower from the 2010-level of 59.6%. The employment rate of women (for the 15-64 age bracket) settled at 45.1% in 2011, much lower from the respective 2011 rate for men (65.9%) (see Statistical Annex for Article 6 – Annex 1, table 2B).

41. The employment rate for the 20-64 age group declined by 4.1 percentage points (pps) in 2011 to 59.9% from 64% in 2010. The employment rate drop was bigger among men (5.1 pps decline in the 2010-2011 period) than among women (3.1 pps) for this age group. More precisely, the employment rate for men aged 20-64 eased to 71.1% in 2011 from 76.2% in 2010, while the employment rate for women in the same age group settled at 48.6% in 2011 from 51.7% in 2010 (see Statistical Annex for Article 6 – Annex 1, Table 2B).

(i) *Young people*

42. Young people in Greece have been affected significantly by the decline in economic activity. As far as the employment rate of young people aged 15-24 years old is concerned, it was 16.3% in 2011 from 20.3% in 2010 (4pps decline in 2011 vs. 2010). Youth employment rate is indeed low in Greece, especially for young women (12.9% for women in 2011 vs. 19.6% for men in 2011) (see Annex 1 – Table 2C).

(ii) *Older people*

43. The recession in the Greek economy had also an impact in the employment rate of people in the 55-64 age group in 2011. More precisely, the employment rate of people in the 55-64 age group declined to 39.4% in 2011 from 42.3% in 2010. The employment rate of women in the 55-64 age bracket settled at 27.3% in 2011 from 28.9% in 2010. We note that the employment rate of women in the 55-64 age bracket had exhibited an upward trend in the 2004-2010 period (see Statistical Annex for Article 6 – Annex 1, Table 2D).

(iii) *Types of employment in Greece*

44. The predominant type of employment in the country is still the traditional model of full-time employment. The share of part time employment is lower in Greece as compared to the EE-27 average, however, a slight increase to 6.8% was evident in 2011 from 6.4% in 2010 and 5.6% in 2008. However, in Greece the percentage of part timers who choose to work part time because they cannot find a full time job (56.5% in 2011) far exceeds EE-27 average (25.5% in 2010) (see Statistical Annex for Article 6 – Annex 1, Table 2E). Also, part-time employment is more widespread among women than men (see respective table in Annex 1).

45. The percentage of temporary employees in Greece in 2011 was 11.6%, lower than the 2010-level of 12.4%. The percentage of temporary employed women was higher than that of men, at 12.9% in 2011, while for men it was 10.5% (see Statistical Annex for Article 6 – Annex 1, Table 2F).

46. *Self-employment in Greece:* We should highlight the high percentage of self-employment in Greece. The ratio of those employed for their own account (self-employed persons without having any personnel) to the total number of employed persons in 2011 was 23.3% against 22.3% in 2010 and the ratio of employers to the total number of employed persons was 7.8% in 2011 against 8% in 2010. The percentage of salaried employees is estimated at 63.5% in 2011, a slightly lower than the 2010-level of 64%, but significantly lower than the mean percentage of employees in the European Union (~80%) (see Statistical Annex for Article 6 – Annex 1, table 2G).

47. *Employment by sector:* according to the EL.STAT. data on employment by economic sector (see Annex 1 - table 2H), the tertiary sector has the biggest share of employment (69.8% in 2011) in comparison to the primary and secondary sectors (12.4% and 17.8%, respectively in 2011). It is worth mentioning that employment in the secondary sector has posted a significant decline in the 2008-2011 period, amid weak economic

activity (note the construction and manufacturing sectors were among the sectors mostly hit by the crisis, see Statistical Annex for Article 6 – Annex 1, table 2I & 2I, part II).

**(c) Unemployment**

48. According to data provided by the Hellenic Statistical Authority (Labour Force Survey), the unemployed persons (year's average) were 876,900 in 2011, higher than the 2010-level of 628,700. The number of unemployed people exceeded the 1 million level in the 4th quarter of 2011 (1.03 million) for the first time since ELSTAT Labour Force Survey data were made available on a quarterly basis (1998). The number of unemployed people (15-74 years old) reached 1,056.5 thousands in January 2012 and 1,070.7 thousands in February 2012 – seasonally adjusted figures (see Statistical Annex for Article 6 – Annex 1, table 3A).

49. The total unemployment rate in Greece rose to 17.7% in 2011 from 12.5% in 2010, 9.5% in 2009 and 7.6% in 2008. The total unemployment rate surpassed the 20%-level (for the first time since 1998 when data are available on a quarterly basis) in the 4th quarter of 2011 (20.7%). However, the unemployment rate remained at high levels in the first two months of 2012 [January 2012: 21.3%, February 2012: 21.7% - seasonally adjusted figures]. Unemployment in Greece is higher among women (21.4% in 2011 against 14.9% for men).

50. The analysis of unemployment by age group and gender confirms once more that in our country unemployment rate is particularly high among young people and especially women (see Statistical Annex for Article 6 – Annex 1, table 3B).

51. The unemployment rate for young people (15-24 years old) rose to 44.4% in 2011 from 32.9% in 2010 and 25.8% in 2009. It is worth mentioning that the unemployment rate of people in the 15-24 age group rose to a high of 53.8% in February 2012 compared to 40.3% in February 2011. The unemployment rate of young people (15-24) has settled at 50.8% in January 2012 (see Statistical Annex for Article 6 – Annex 1, table 3C).

52. The percentage of the “new” unemployed, that is the percentage of persons who entered for the first time into the labour market, marginally increased in 2011 to 24%, while this figure is lower than the 2008 and 2009 levels (see Statistical Annex for Article 6 – Annex 1, Table 3D).

53. However, note that the percentage of ‘long term’ unemployed, that is the percentage of persons that have been looking for a job for more than 1 year (irrespective of being ‘new’ or ‘old’ unemployed) settled at 51.6% in 2011 from 47.1% in 2010. The increase in long term unemployment is a worrying development (see Statistical Annex for Article 6 – Annex 1, table 3D).

*Regional unemployment rates (para. 35 of the Committee's concluding observations)*

54. Looking into the geographical areas, we conclude that unemployment is high across all Greek regions (2-digit rates). At regional level, the highest unemployment rate is observed in Western Macedonia where it reaches 25% and in Central Greece with 23,8% respectively. On the contrary, the lowest unemployment rate is reported in the South Aegean with 11,9% and in the Ionian Islands with 13,9% (see Statistical Annex for Article 6 – Annex 1, table 3E and table 3F). The large deviation in unemployment and employment rates in the various regions of the country reflects the low geographical mobility of workers. The limited geographical mobility could be attributed to: (a) the high rate of owner occupancy in Greece (over 80%); (b) the relatively high transportation cost that does not allow the daily commuting of workers; and (c) cultural considerations. There is a provision in the Operational Program ‘Human Resource Development’ 2007-

2013 for Regional Specification of the labour market needs in order to effectively counter regional disparities.

55. A very important category of actions within the context of actions of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security and Regional Operational Programs are the special Integrated Interventions Programs in prefectures of the country afflicted particularly by unemployment, through the implementation of combined actions of counseling services, training, increased subsidy to enterprises for creation of new job posts, and subsidy to unemployed persons for the creation of their own enterprise.

56. Within this framework, programmes for the re-hiring of unemployed persons to hotel undertakings of seasonal and continuous operation through the subsidization of the social security have been designed. The total budget of the programmes amounts to 95.000.000€ and 120.000 persons approximately are expected to be benefited.

### **3. Employment policy with regard to women and young people**

57. The analysis of unemployment by gender and age group confirms that the most important unemployment problem is faced by women and young people. On the Greek employment policy with regard, in particular, to women and young people the following should be stressed:

#### **(a) Actions for the implementation of equality of opportunity or treatment in employment or occupation**

58. The issues of women's unemployment and reduction of gender discrimination in the labour market are dealt with by the adoption of cross-cutting measures, but also through special programs for unemployed women aiming to enhance their effective access to the labour market and the elimination of social exclusion. Under the GSGE National Action Plan for Substantive Gender Equality 2010-2013, the Advisory Centres services will support unemployed and self-employed women and female owners of small businesses to upgrade their knowledge and skills in order to improve their labour market position.

59. Furthermore, the Operational Program "Administrative Reform 2007-2013" within the National Strategic Reference framework, provides for "Enhancing women's employment in the public and the social sector". The programme aims at the improvement of possibilities of women's promotion in posts of responsibility to Public Administration by means of action plans targeted to their personal empowerment and the improvement of their skills.

60. Moreover, through the third Community Support Framework, the Secretary General for gender equality elaborated the project "Integrated Interventions in favour of women", which benefited 9,018 women.

61. As for regional development, emphasis has been given to the elaboration of the National Strategic Reference Framework 2007-2013. Five Regional Operational Programmes will contribute to the covering of national strategic objectives additionally to sectoral programmes, with emphasis to specific characteristics and needs of every Region.

62. Law 3896/2010 on "Application of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment between men and women in matters of labour and employment", incorporating EU Directive 2006/54/EU refers to sexual harassment, which is considered as discrimination on the ground of gender in the workplace. The above law introduces the principle of equal treatment forbidding strictly, every form of direct or indirect gender discrimination. Particularly, it forbids any discrimination on the basis of gender or marital status, specifies explicitly that men and women are entitled to equal payment for equal work and abolishes any discrimination between men and women in employment. The law

specifies the civil, administrative and penal sanctions incurred for its violation, while assigning the burden of proof to the offender. The Greek Ombudsman is entitled to monitor the application of the principle of equal treatment for men and women, co-operating in parallel with the Labour Inspectorate with regard to the private sector.

63. A Memorandum of Co-operation between the Secretariat General of Gender Equality and the Office of the UNHCR in Greece has been signed in order to jointly defend the rights of women and minor girls who have requested asylum or to whom asylum or a humanitarian status in Greece has been provided.

**(b) Actions of the Manpower Employment Organization (OAED)**

64. The acute unemployment problem of women was dealt with by the OAED through a series of active policies and targeted employment programs. The encouragement of a larger participation of women in the labour market is one of the main guidelines of the Organization's employment strategy. In this framework a number of targeted measures and programmes are being implemented in order to boost women's employment and to promote women entrepreneurship.

**(c) Young people**

65. The major causes that lead the young people to unemployment are: (a) the established mismatch between the qualifications and the skills that the youth possess and the specializations demanded by the enterprises, (b) the lack of working experience, that is connected to the reluctance of the employees to hire people with no experience and (c) the relatively greater participation of young people in educational programmes.

66. Comparison: The following tables show the unemployment rates of young people in Greece and EU-27.

67. According to data provided by Eurostat and EL.STAT., youth unemployment rates in Greece are much higher than the European averages. Young women experience higher unemployment rates than young men. It should be mentioned however, that high unemployment rates among young people is a common challenge across all member states of the European Union.

Table 2

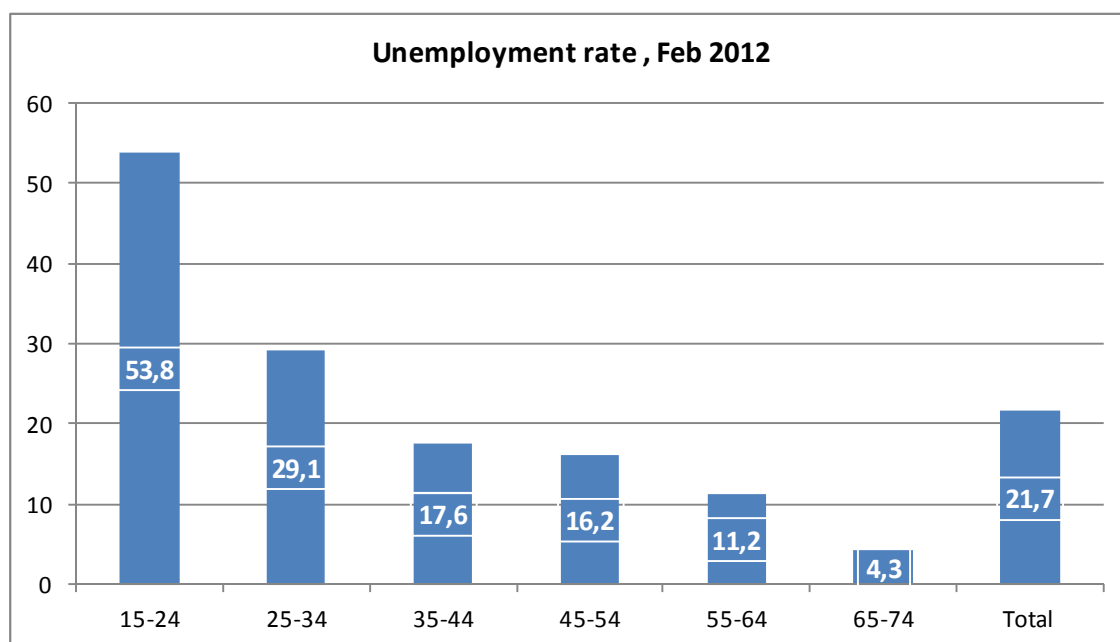
**Unemployment rates in Greece by age group and gender (%)**

15-19 years														
Total	2008	2009	2010	2011	Males	2008	2009	2010	2011	Females	2008	2009	2010	2011
Greece	26,1	30,9	39,0	56,0	Greece	19,0	22,4	34,7	48,1	Greece	36,3	43,5	45,5	67,7
20-24 years														
Total	2008	2009	2010	2011	Males	2008	2009	2010	2011	Females	2008	2009	2010	2011
Greece	21,4	25,0	32,0	42,7	Greece	16,6	18,8	25,4	36,9	Greece	27,7	32,5	40,0	49,5
25-29 years														
Total	2008	2009	2010	2011	Males	2008	2009	2010	2011	Females	2008	2009	2010	2011
Greece	13,1	15,0	19,7	29,6	Greece	9,9	12,1	16,4	26,1	Greece	17,3	18,8	23,8	33,8

Source: Eurostat.

68. The graph below illustrates the Greek unemployment rate (February 2012) by (main) age group. Obviously, the highest unemployment rates are observed among young people.

Figure 1  
Unemployment rate in Greece by (main) age group - %



Source: EL.STAT.

**(d) Policies for the promotion of employment and the reduction of unemployment of young people**

69. The young and, especially, those entering the labour market for the first time face particular difficulty in finding a job.

70. Law 3845/2010 provides for work experience contracts under programmes for unemployed youngsters aged 16-24 with wages equal to 80% of the General National Collective Agreement and subsidization of their social security cost. In the context of the measures taken in order to facilitate access of young people and newcomers in the labour market there is a work experience programme (stage) in the private sector for people aged 16-24. The programme concerns 5.000 beneficiaries and there is also the possibility to convert the work experience programme into a regular employment contract.

Law No 3863/2010 aims to facilitate young people's access to the labour market so that they might acquire work experience. In particular, it provides that special apprenticeship contracts of up to one (1) year's duration may be concluded between employers and persons who are between 15 and up to 18 years of age, in order for the latter to acquire skills. The said apprentices are paid with the 70% of the minimum wage or salary provided for by the National General Labour Collective Agreement (EGSSE). These persons are not subject to the provisions of labour law, except for those on the health and safety of workers. Thus, a maximum period of time as well as a minimum wage for all these contracts is established. The general time limits in force for adolescents as well as the minimum age limit for employment are safeguarded. 72. The promotion of employment and the combat against unemployment of young people have become the Government's high and immediate priority. To this end a coherent, integrated and effective strategy for the promotion of employment among young people has been adopted, giving emphasis to the harmonization of education and vocational training with the labour market needs.



73. The quantitative objective of reducing the percentage of early school leavers below 10% by 2013 has been set. This objective is also part of the overall planning of the National Strategic Reference Framework 2007-2013. Reducing early school leaving percentage down to 12.5% by 2010 is the mid-objective. The respective follow-up indicator is “Early school leavers not in education or training”.

74. On the other hand, OAED through Individual Action Plans implements individualized interventions that offer to the young person access to a full scale of activities and acts within the framework of active employment policies (e.g. guiding, pre-training, training, employment, subsidized or not, Accompanying Support Services etc.), or direct placement in a vacant working position.

75. In addition, OAED concludes contracts of active employment policies to other certified agents, coming from the public and private sector of economy, local government, university education, the non-governmental organizations etc.

76. Through the Operational Program “Human Resources Development” 2007-2013, and as regards the improvement of matching of labour supply and demand, a number of activities took place in order to promote systemic interventions.

77. The General Secretariat for Youth, in its effort to respond to the challenges and demands of today, and also to the effort of young persons to enter the production process by setting up their own business, instituted the “Young Entrepreneurship Guichets”.

#### **4. Policies and measures aiming at full-time employment**

78. OAED implements a series of programs for enhancing employment and combating unemployment (training programmes, work experience acquisition programmes, programmes for the subsidy of unemployed persons so they can start their business activity, programs for subsidizing enterprises for employing unemployed persons).

#### **5. Programmes for the subsidization of social security contributions**

79. The Ministry of Labour and Social Security, with a view to preventing the impact of the crisis on employment, is implementing a series of programmes through the subsidization of the social security contributions for unemployed persons for a period up to four years. In the drawing up of these programmes, special care has been taken for social groups that are vulnerable with respect to the labour market, such as young persons up to 30 years, unemployed persons close to retirement, long-term unemployed women over the age of 45 and unemployed women over the age of 50, etc.

#### **6. Cheque for the reintegration in the labour market**

80. In accordance with the provisions of article 2 (2) of Law 3845/2010 on “Measures for the implementation of the support mechanism for the Greek Economy by the Eurozone member states and the International Monetary Fund”, it is provided for that each subsidized unemployed person is entitled to a “reintegration cheque” for his/ her reintegration in the labour market, whose value in money is equal to the total amount he/she is entitled to receive as unemployment benefit.

81. The aim of this provision is to convert the “passive” unemployment benefit into an active labour market policy. According to the said provision, the undertaking hires the subsidized unemployed person and receives the “cheque’s” monetary value as a monthly subsidization by the OAED for the months remaining until the end of the subsidization.

#### **7. Private Employment Services**

82. Private Employment Services also contribute to the increase of employment. In Greece there are two categories of private Employment Services active, namely

Temporary Employment Agencies (E.P.A.) and Private Employment Counselling Offices (I.G.S.E.), which concern private businesses and provide their services free of charge to those seeking employment. The Ministry of Labour and Social Security is responsible for the supervision as regards their activities.

83. Since 2/07/2011, by virtue of law 3919/2011 on “freedom of practicing professions and abolishment of unjustified constraints in accessing and practicing a profession” the administrative license that was issued for the operation of a private employment agency has been abolished. Nevertheless in both cases (IGSE & EPA) the public administration still examines if the applicant fulfils the necessary requirements.

84. Article 3 of Law 3846/2010, “Guarantees for safety at work and other provisions” stipulates that temporary employment is allowed only on the grounds of temporary, special and seasonal needs and that this form of employment is not allowed under normal circumstances in order to cover fixed and permanent needs of the enterprise. Equal treatment in working conditions with the respective employees of the indirect employer is safeguarded.

## **Article 7 – Right to just and favourable conditions of work**

### **1. Equal pay for work of equal value**

85. There is a gap in salaries of men and women up to 10% in favour of the former. Women represent 41,6 of the total number of employees, 40,6% of permanent employees and 50% of those temporarily employed. As far as income disparities according to gender are concerned, 60% of the employees with a net monthly income of less than 750 euros are women, permanently or temporarily employed. The percentage of women with a net monthly income of less than 500 euros corresponds to 75% of the total number of employees, 70% of those fully employed and 80% of the employees partially employed.

86. A net monthly income less than 750 euros corresponds to 3 out of 10 working women 33,7% against 16,9 of men. Among the women working fully or permanently the proportion of women employed with a net monthly income less than 750 euros is reduced to 30% of women working fully or permanently. On the contrary, women partially employed with a net monthly income less than 750 euros correspond to 90% of women partially employed. As for women temporarily employed, the proportion of women working with a net monthly income less than 750 euros correspond to 2/3 of the total number of women working under a temporary work contract (67%). The majority of women with low net income work in the private sector (85%).

Table 3

**Difference between the average gross hourly pay to men and the corresponding pay to women as a percentage of the average gross hourly pay to men (for salaried workers)**

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Greece	15	18	17	11	10	9td.	10
EU-27	16*	16*	16*	15*	1*	15*	15*

Source: European Union.

\* Estimate; td = temporary data.

### **2. Measures for the elimination of discrimination**

87. By virtue of law 3896/2010 “Implementation of the principal of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in work and employment issues”, Directive 2006/54/EC has been incorporated in Greek law. The purpose of the law is to create a

comprehensive and clear legal framework for the implementation of the principle of equal treatment between men and women in work and employment issues, in the private as well as in the public sector. As already stressed, article 12 of the above Law stipulates expressly that the principle of equal treatment of men and women is implemented also in respect of the terms and conditions of work, promotions and personnel evaluation systems.

88. Moreover, by virtue of Law 3250/2004 on “Partial employment in the public sector, Local Authorities and Legal Entities”, among the personnel recruited are included: (a) mothers with minor children in a percentage of 10% and (b) parents with three children and more in a percentage of 10%. It is also provided that a percentage of 60% from the different categories of beneficiaries is covered by women, provided that a respective interest has been manifested.

89. The Secretariat General for Gender Equality, in order to combat discrimination in employment, launched “Positive Action in favour of women in small and medium enterprises as well as in large firms” of the Project “Employment and Professional Training” of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Community Support Framework. Within this framework, financial incentives are given to enterprises for the continuous training of women, the covering of functional expenses of nurseries, reinforcement of telework, information and sensitization of all employees, extension of quality certification systems (ISO).

### 3. Measures to ensure safety and health at the workplace

90. The national policy on issues of safety and health at work is based on the tripartite representation and social dialogue. It is implemented through a national system of appropriate structures and processes that involves government bodies, employers’ and workers’ organizations, scientific and professional bodies, educational institutions, safety and health agencies. Our country harmonizes promptly its national law with the EU directives and strives to ratify the international labour conventions that include organizational and technical measures related to workers’ safety and health. As regards the content of the relevant laws, there are numerous general regulations of a horizontal application, while at the same time there are many special laws regulating occupational safety and health issues in particular sectors of economic activity.

91. The Occupational Safety and Health Inspectorate of the Labour Inspectorate undertakes actions for the improvement of health and safety conditions at workplaces and prevention of accidents and occupational diseases.

Table 4

#### Data on the activities of the Occupational Safety and Health Inspectorate from 2004 to 2011

<i>Inspection activity</i>	<i>2004</i>	<i>2005</i>	<i>2006</i>	<i>2007</i>	<i>2008</i>	<i>2009</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2011</i>
Inspections-reinspections	26.161	25.477	27.857	27.895	24.600	24.496	2.5259	28.150
Prosecuting reports-impeachments	1.490	1.045	1.303	1.132	1.063	971	839	775
Suspension of works	1.991	2.065	2.248	2.201	1.738	1.599	1.357	806
Imposed fines	2.238	1.349	1.379	1.315	1.246	1.018	1.023	590
<b>Amounts (in Euro)</b>	<b>2.721.300</b>	<b>1.928.250</b>	<b>2.949.100</b>	<b>3.021.500</b>	<b>3.354.900</b>	<b>2.856.400</b>	<b>2.405.900</b>	<b>1.704.111</b>

92. Moreover, the agencies of the Occupational Safety and Health Inspectorate of the Labour Inspectorate implemented a number of inspections and information campaigns.

**(a) Improvement of sanitary, safety and working conditions for the uniformed personnel of the Hellenic Police**

93. Presidential Decree 45/2008 (A'–73) "*Health and safety measures for the uniformed personnel of the Hellenic Police*" aims at the improvement of sanitary, safety and working conditions for the uniformed personnel of the Hellenic Police. The Decree provides for the measures to be taken for the protection of the Hellenic Police personnel against hazards related to their health and safety during the exercise of their tasks. Its provisions revolve around the protection of all uniformed personnel of the Hellenic Police, without exception (police officers, Special Guards, Border Guards) against hazards directly related to their health and safety during the exercise of their tasks. In order to prevent or minimize all relevant hazards, special emphasis is put on medical examination, the provision of all necessary technical equipment, adequate training, as well as the maintenance and disinfection of the Police's premises and vehicles. Special care is taken as regards the guarding and transfer of detainees, patrolling, road traffic regulation and sanitary landfills patrolling.

**(b) Data concerning work accidents**

94. The following table presents the available statistical data concerning work accidents reported to Labour Inspectorate (S.EP.E) during the years 2004-2011.

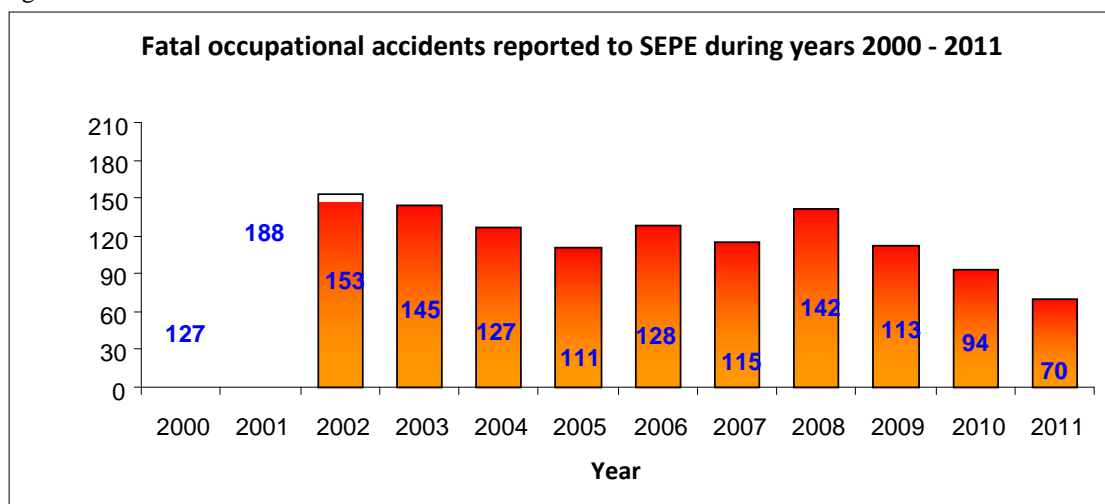
Table 5

**Work accidents reported to Labour Inspectorate (S.EP.E) during the years 2004-2011**

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Reported work accidents	6.333	6.044	6.255	6.561	6.657	6.381	5.721	5.203
Fatal work accidents (total)	127	111	128	115	142	113	94	70
Fatal work accidents (except for pathological)	97	95	105	94	104	84	63	39
Fatal work accidents in the construction sector (except for pathological)	68	62	56	59	48	43	29	18
Fatal work accidents in other enterprises (except for pathological)	29	33	49	35	56	41	34	21

95. The following graph illustrates the number of fatal work accidents reported to the Labour Inspectorate for the years 2000-2011.

Figure 2



#### 4. Legislation concerning the collective dismissals

96. In accordance with the provisions of article 74, paragraph 1 of Law No 3863/2010 on the “New Social Security System and other relevant provisions, regulations on labour relations” it is provided that collective dismissals limits are adjusted as follows:

- (a) Up to six (6) employees for businesses with 20 to 150 employees;
- (b) 5% of the total staff and up to thirty (30) employees for businesses with more than 150 employees.

#### Article 8 – Right to form and join trade unions

97. According to the data from the General Confederation of Greek Workers (GSEE) its members are as follows:

- Primary Trade Union Organizations, members of GSEE 2,587;
- Secondary Trade Union Organizations, members of GSEE 157;
- Registered Natural Persons Members of GSEE 905,375.

#### 1. Police personnel

98. Law 1264/1982 “For the Democratization of Trade Union Movement and the Protection of Trade Union Freedoms”, as modified by Law 2783/1999 and article 18 of Law 3938/2011, protects trade unions rights and regulates the establishment, the organization, the operation and the action of trade unions. Within this framework, unions of police officers, law enforcement officials, border guards and special guards operate throughout Greece, representing the persons employed by the Hellenic Police in all prefectures in the country. Moreover, senior police officers, lower ranking police officers and border guards have established trade union organizations and have become members of the European Council of Police Unions and of the European Confederation of Police Unions.

99. There are no limitations imposed by the Hellenic State and Police by-laws as regards the establishment of confederations of police unions and the participation of the said unions in international organizations. Moreover, there are no limitations as regards their free action, with the exception of the provisions of Article 3 of Article 30A, according to which, without prejudice to Article 281 of Civil Code (abuse of rights), the exercise of trade rights shall be subject to the specific limitations imposed by the particularities, the mission and, more importantly, the national and independent nature of the Hellenic Police.

## **2. Judicial officials**

100. Article 23 (2) (a) of the Greek Constitution stipulates that the right to strike at any form is forbidden to the judicial officials. Nevertheless, article 89 (1) of the Constitution provides that it is allowed to establish union of magistrates (judges and prosecutors) as the law determines. Such unions of magistrates have already been established and operate in Greece.

## **3. Military personnel**

101. The military staff of the Greek Armed Forces are not allowed to establish or to join trade union organizations or to participate in strikes, as long as they are still in service in the Armed Forces.

# **Article 9 – Right to social security**

## **1. Welfare benefits**

102. The Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity applies through the competent Agencies 10 financial aid programmes in relation to the benefits of the social security funds, depending on the type and percentage of disability, the insurance status, etc. According to Art. 9 of law 4052/2012, the Welfare department will be transferred to the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection starting with 1.07.2012.

103. The financial aid sum is not linked to the income of the recipient of public assistance and the relevant tax exemption.

104. In addition, in the framework of the benefits policy applied by the Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity, the transport benefit was established, replacing the fuel benefit, as specified by Law 3627/2007. For the maternity benefit and the benefit of a family with many children, see article 10 of this report. For the nutrition benefits of kidney patients, see article 12 of this report. For the benefits of housing aid in case of calamity and to repatriating aliens of Greek descent, see article 11 of this report. The disability benefits include the benefit for HIV-positive persons and haemophiliacs.

## **2. Social security benefits**

105. Social security is guaranteed by the Greek Constitution (article 22, para. 5). The system of social security functions through self-governed Organizations and covers all the employees throughout the country. In the sector of social protection, over the last years, a long-lasting social dialogue was being led in Greece, aiming at the reform of the social insurance system, in order to guarantee a secure future and to ensure a modern, rational, socially fair and viable system with long-lasting prospect.

106. A basic concern in this effort was to maintain the public, global, obligatory and redistributive character of social insurance and at the same time face great problems that have been accumulated during the last few decades (e.g. efficient management of the social

security organizations' assets, existence of a large number of social insurance organizations).

107. Law No 3655 was adopted in April 2008 to reform the Greek social security system and ensure its sustainability and capacity to provide for the social protection needs of citizens. The law integrated the pre-existing 133 institutions and branches into 13 social security institutions. The new structure simplified supervision and strengthened efforts to reduce contribution evasion and unregistered work. It has also enacted the procedure to lead to better investment yields through more effective and better management of funds. Furthermore, the Social Security Capital for Intergenerational Solidarity (AKAGE), which will guarantee the social security programmes in Greece, will be funded by earmarking 10% of the proceeds of the privatization of public enterprises, 4% of the annual income derived from the VAT and 10% of social resources. The fund will remain "locked" until 2019.

108. For easier transactions and cross-reference, from 1.6.2009 the National Social Security Record Number (AMKA) has been established as the single, mandatory social security number for the very first time and for employment for everyone directly or indirectly insured, in order to be employed, to be insured and pay contributions, to renew the healthcare booklet and to receive pensions, benefits and allowances.

109. The recent social security law No. 3863/2010 changes the structure of the retirement system in our country. From 1 January 2015 onwards the main statutory pension will consist of the basic pension and the proportional pension. The basic pension will be granted by all Social Security Organizations and the State to beneficiaries who are at least 65 years old and fulfill criteria based on their income and residence in the country. The proportional pension is paid on the basis of the entire insured life of the person entitled to pension. It is calculated for each full year of insurance, on the basis of percentages of the anticipated pensionable earnings which are established by the law.

110. The recent social security law also establishes the following:

- -Unified conditions for retirement and unified rules for the calculation of pensions for all;
- Minimum thresholds are established for old-age, disability and survivors' pensions, which currently (2010) amount to the minimum pension thresholds and which shall be annually adjusted;
- Retirement age limits shall be readjusted, depending on changes in life expectancy in our country, with the age of 65 being as the reference point;
- Further consolidation of 13 insurance organizations into three is currently under way (for salaried employees, farmers, self-employed);
- A new insurance form is established and the employment stamp is introduced for domestic personnel, agricultural and seasonal workers;
- A unified certification center for disabilities is established and the National Registry of People with Disabilities is created;
- Occupations and specialties that shall fall under the Regulation for Arduous and Unhealthy Occupations are specified for all social security organizations, to be applied as of 01/07/2011;
- The participation of insurance organizations in programs of voluntary termination of service is abolished for the enterprises of the public and the broader public sector.

111. Aiming at combating poverty and ensuring a sufficient income for everybody especially for the elderly people and low income pensioners, the Greek social security

system has enacted since the year 1996 the Pensioners' Social Solidarity Allowance (EKAS) which is granted to beneficiaries who have completed the 60<sup>th</sup> year of age and meet certain income criteria. The EKAS is wholly financed by the State Budget and for the year 2010 has been formed as follows:

Table 6

<i>Amount of income</i>	<i>Amount of EKAS</i>
until 7.607,54 €	230,00 €
from 7.607,55 to 7.905,91 €	172,50 €
from 7.905,92 to 8.104,76 €	115,00 €
from 8.104,77 to 8.353,38 €	57,50 €

Table 7

**Expenses for social protection (in million of euro)**

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Expenses for social protection	8.813,03	8.930,66	9.696,87	10.464,80	14.189,84	16.415,31	13.563,78
GNP (in millions of euro)	185.225	198.609	213.207	228.180	236.917	235.000	231.900
Expenses for social protection/ GNP (%)	4,76	4,50	4,55	4,59	5,99	6,98	5,85

## **Article 10 – Protection of the family**

### **1. Measures and services to support families**

#### **(a) Support of the family-benefits to the families having many children**

112. By virtue of Law 3454/2006 on the “Support of the Family and other provisions”, beneficiaries of financial and institutional benefits are families having three children.

#### **(b) Unprotected children – maternity benefit**

113. The State grants to all beneficiaries that meet the requirements of the Law, with no discrimination as to race, religion or origin, the benefits provided for in the Financial Aid Programme for unprotected children (Law 4051/60), provided they are permanent residents of Greece.

114. All working mothers who cannot claim maternity benefits from a social security fund or are uninsured are also granted maternity benefits. The maternity benefit is also granted to all foreign citizens, provided they meet the aforementioned requirements and their permanent residence is in Greece.

### **2. Measures for the support of the family in the field of social protection**

115. The support of the family is an important priority in the sector of Social Protection. In the National Reform Programme 2011-2014, a long-term strategy is developed, with regard to the fight against poverty and the breaking of the intergenerational transmission of poverty, with main axes of priority the support of parents' employment and the ensuring of



access for children and their families to services, in order to cover basic needs and upgrading their quality of life. More specifically:

(a) Actions for the enhancement of employment of women and young people (See this report, under article 6);

(b) Actions for the reconciliation between family and professional life through the 2<sup>nd</sup> Community Support Framework, Children Care Structures, as well as Elderly and Helpless Persons Care Structures, were established. Through the 3<sup>rd</sup> Community Support Framework, about 1,620 Structures with about 7,000 workers and more than 130,000 benefited persons were financed.

#### **Operational Programme: “Human Resources Development” 2007-2013/**

##### **Action: Reconciliation of family and professional life**

116. The aim of this action is to increase women’s employment and to preserve women’s working positions by supporting them through the provision of childcare services in specific care structures. Actions for the reconciliation between family and professional life were also developed in the context of the EU Initiative EQUAL. The above Initiative was financed by the European Social Fund by 75% and the Ministry of Employment and Social Protection by 25%. It was intended for all groups affected by discrimination and inequalities in the labour market, with a view to their professional and, in general, social integration.

117. Moreover, policies promoting gender equality contribute to the reconciliation between family and professional life. Axis III of the Operational Program ‘Administrative Reform’ 2007-2013 is dedicated to the strengthening of equality policies throughout the actions of public authorities. In the same context, all regulatory administrative acts which have been issued and concern the implementation of vocational training programs, programs providing accompanying supportive services and services for the promotion to employment, provide for the compulsory participation of women at a percentage of 60% in every intervention of the Operational Program.

### **3. Reconciliation of working and private life, including protection of maternity**

118. Schemes that help reconcile working and private life are embodied in the framework of maternity and parental leaves. Different schemes apply for the workers in the public and private sector. More specifically:

#### **(a) Maternity leave/Delivery and confinement leave**

##### *(i) Public sector*

119. Five months of maternity leave are granted to public sector employees: the duration of paid maternity leave is 20 weeks.

##### *(ii) Private sector*

120. According to article 7, National General Collective Labour Agreement 1993 and article 7, National General Collective Labour Agreement 2000-2001 ratified by article 11, Law 2874/2000, the duration of maternity leave shall be seventeen (17) weeks for workers at any employer under a private law work relationship. Compliance with such periods is compulsory. In case of premature birth, the rest of the leave shall be granted after the delivery, so that the total leave be seventeen (17) weeks. Other legislative or regulatory arrangements provide for more favourable terms for the female workers.

(iii) *Special maternity leave*

121. Law 3655/2008 ‘Administrative and organizational reform of the Social Security System’ (article 142) has granted an additional period of leave for mothers employed in the private sector. Lasting up to six months, this special maternity leave is granted to mothers insured with the Social Security Foundation (IKA) and employed full-time or part-time at enterprises under a fixed-term or open-ended labour relationship. According to Law 3996/2011 (Article 36) women that take the special maternity leave are also insured for medical care

122. Law 3896/2010 on “Application of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment between men and women in matters of labour and employment” (article 16) stipulates that the worker who has obtained a maternity leave shall be entitled, upon expiry of such leave, to return to her job or to an equivalent post on the same employment terms and conditions and to enjoy any improvement of working conditions, to which she would be entitled during her absence. Any less favourable treatment of the woman due to pregnancy or maternity, or of parents due to a parental upbringing leave or child care leave shall constitute discrimination (article 18).

123. Moreover, articles 48-54 of Chapter F of Law 4075/2012 (A’89) adjusted our national legislation to the provisions of Directive 2010/18/EU of the Council of 8<sup>th</sup> March 2012. In accordance with the above Law, working parents of both sexes, provided they have a year of previous service with the same employer, are entitled to unpaid leave of at least four (4) months and until their child reaches the age of six (6). Workers who have adopted a child have the same right, too.

(b) **Protection from dismissal**

124. Article 36(1) of Law 3996/2011 prohibits as absolutely null and void the termination of the labour contract or the labour relationship of a female worker by her employer, both during her pregnancy and for a period of 18 months after the delivery or during her absence for a longer period, due to a disease resulting from pregnancy or delivery, unless there is a serious reason for the termination.

125. Furthermore, Law 3250/2004 on “Partial employment in the public sector, the Local Authorities and Legal Entities of Public Law” provides for the following categories of employees, among others, as candidates for partial employment: mothers with minor children, in a percentage of 10%; parents with three children and more as well as their children, in a percentage of 10%.

126. Finally, by virtue of Law 3454/2006 on “reinforcement of the family and other provisions”, the above mentioned provision has been extended to people with many children and parents with three children.

(c) **Other leaves**

127. Marriage and child birth leave, Child care leave, Unpaid leave, Single-parent families, Leave of absence for monitoring the child’s school performance, Leave in case of child’s or other dependant’s sickness, Foster parents, Reduced working hours.

(d) **Allowances granted by the Agricultural Insurance Organization**

128. The Agricultural Insurance Organization, as an agency of the Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity, grants a number of allowances to families of three or more children. The above mentioned allowances and the lifelong pension are paid to the beneficiary regardless of any other allowance, salary, pension, remuneration, reimbursement or

profession. The allowances and the lifelong pension are paid every two months. Since 01.01.2007, no tax is deducted.

**(e) Single parent families**

129. A series of favourable arrangements have been provided to unmarried women, such as: parental leave (paid or non-paid), marriage benefit, reduced working time, priority in kindergartens, allowance for being a parent of many children, monthly allowance to children deprived from paternal protection, etc. The General Secretariat for Gender Equality has issued a special brochure for single parent families, where all allowances granted by the State are mentioned in detail.

**4. Legislation against discrimination in access to goods and services (paras. 15 and 36 of the Committee's concluding observations)**

130. During the reference period of this report, Law 3304/2005 (Official Gazette 16A/27-1-2005) 'Application of the principle of equal treatment regardless of racial or ethnic origin, religious or other beliefs, disability, age or sexual orientation' was promulgated, whereby the two Directives of the European Communities 2000/43/EC and 2000/78/EC were incorporated in the national law. For more details, see under Article 2 hereabove.

131. It is to be noted that the Ministry of Employment and Social Protection has implemented a series of actions aiming at providing information on the new legislation against discrimination.

**(a) Programmes to ensure access to services for all: Community Programme Progress "For Employment and Social Solidarity" (2007-2013)**

132. The Ministry of Labour and Social Security in the framework of the Community Programme Progress has implemented the project "Actions to promote the principle of Equal Treatment". The said project included the following actions: (a) Awareness raising campaign: "To make equality reality", (b) Training seminar for judges, (c) Combating discrimination on the grounds of disability in the field of work and employment.

**(b) Operational Program 'Human Resource Development 2007-2013'**

133. In the context of the Operational Program 'Human Resource Development' for Programming Period 2007-2013, the Thematic Priority: 'Complete Integration of all Human Resources into a Society of Equal Opportunities' provides, among others actions, for a Category of Interventions 'Prevention of and dealing with social exclusion of vulnerable population groups', which concerns the implementation of targeted interventions for the social and professional integration of vulnerable population groups, including groups with cultural and/or religious differences, such as the Roma.

**5. Measures of protection and assistance taken on behalf of children in the field of employment (paras. 19 and 40, and 17, 38, 39 of the Committee's concluding observations)**

134. The Labour Inspectorate (S.E.P.E.) supervises and controls the implementation of the labour law regarding the employment of minors. S.E.P.E. is competent to issue work booklets for minors (over 15 years old) and after a medical examination, so that they be allowed to be employed in enterprises. Employers and persons entrusted with the custody of minors, who are employed in any occupation or activity contrary to the law, shall be punished with an imprisonment of up to two (2) years and a fine; administrative sanctions shall also be imposed on the employers.

135. In 2010, by virtue of Law 3850/2010 on the “Ratification of the Code of Laws on the health and safety of workers”, 1.462 work booklets for underage workers were issued, following medical examinations that were carried out by doctors of the Social Insurance Institute (IKA). In 2011, 874 work booklets were issued; 480 of them were granted to boys and 394 to girls. Moreover, in 2010, 3 complaints were lodged concerning illegal employment of minors and 4 fines were imposed, whereas in 2011, 2 complaints were lodged concerning illegal employment of minors and 21 fines were imposed.

#### **6. Establishment of a family**

136. In addition to the information contained in paragraphs 271 and 272 of Greece’s initial report, an important recent development is the facilitation of cohabitation between people of different sex. Greece recognizes the so called “cohabitation pact” as regulated in Law 3719/2008 “Amendments for the family, the child, the society and other provisions”. Under this law two adults (man and woman) may obtain legal recognition of their cohabitation, with legal effects similar to those of the marriage, through a “pact” certified by a notary public and deposited to the Registrar’s office. Special articles provide for the free use of family name, the property relations and the assets of the partners, the alimony following the dissolution of the union, parenthood, parental care and succession rights.

#### **7. Combating domestic violence and children’s sexual exploitation (paras. 16 and 37 of the Committee’s concluding observations)**

137. A Law to fight domestic violence was adopted in 2006, which, inter alia, provides for more severe penalties for offences related to domestic violence; establishes a criminal mediation procedure for domestic violence crimes; punishes as a criminal offence marital rape; explicitly prohibits physical violence against minors; ensures protection to victims both by enabling their access to justice and guaranteeing their safety inside and outside home. The scope of Law 3500/2006 also covers stable partnership relations between a man and a woman who are not married. The adoption of the above Law was a decisive step forward; however, the number of women victims of domestic violence has not significantly decreased.

138. In order to combat domestic violence, Local Government Organizations have been entrusted with the task of counseling victims of domestic violence. The General Secretariat for Gender Equality (GSGE) has developed actions to support women-victims through its two Counseling Centers. Another Shelter run by the Municipality of Athens in cooperation with the GSGE offers hospitality to maltreated women and their children. The General Secretariat has also organized relevant events, including training and awareness-raising seminars; it has also published information leaflets in different languages. The National Centre for Social Solidarity of the Ministry of Health continued to provide support services to victims of violence through the SOS telephone Line ‘197’, three shelters for victims in Athens, with a capacity of 60 beds. Its Services Network for combating domestic violence also includes two more shelters, operated by NGOs and connected to the National Centre for Social Solidarity through Program Agreements which also include funding. It also provides support to victims through its Social support Centers which are staffed with specialized personnel and runs two Counseling/Therapeutic programs for Offenders.

139. Furthermore, the Hellenic Police has issued a manual on the handling by the Police of domestic violence cases, providing guidance to police officers, as well as to all citizens, and in particular women victims of domestic violence. By decision of the Chief of the Hellenic Police, domestic violence has been incorporated in the Police Academy Curriculum as a teaching subject. Moreover training seminars addressed to Police Officers on issues related to the dealing with inter-family violence are regularly conducted.

140. Finally, women's organizations contributed to the development of education and awareness-raising actions.

141. Prevention and combating of violence against women in their family/ private life, in the workplace and in society more broadly is among the strategic goals of the National Action Plan on Substantive Gender Equality 2010-2013 prepared by the General Secretariat for Gender Equality. With regard to domestic violence, the Plan addresses 8 key areas: improving legislation, creating support structures, providing support services, developing prevention, strengthening training, research development and documentation, empowering civil society and promoting institutional partnerships. It is important to note, as a best practice, that a 24-hour SOS hotline was launched in March 2011, operated by psychologists and social workers and covering all forms of gender-based violence. In the first month of its operation, the hotline received 464 calls, most of them from the victims of violence themselves. A National Campaign for information and sensitization of the public on violence against women was launched, putting emphasis on the operation of the above mentioned telephone line through the social message "You are not alone. You are not the only one".

142. The preparation of a Comprehensive Law on violence against women reflects the cross-sectional character of gender violence and is an internationally accepted method for legislating in order to combat the multiple and complex aspects of such criminal activities that penetrate all aspects of everyday life. More specifically, measures under consideration include: on domestic violence, improvement of Law 3500/2006 on domestic violence and enhancement of the framework addressing domestic violence by creating support centres for victims and offering them temporary refuge; on social violence, improvement and enhancement of legislation addressing crimes such as rape and human trafficking. Other cross-cutting issues to be addressed include the enhancement of the institutional role of the G. S. G. E. (Counselling Centres) in the fight of violence against women in all of its forms and protection of the victims; the expansion of provisions on legal assistance to victims in cooperation with Bar Associations, and the establishment of a National Observatory on combating violence against women.

143. Finally, specialized training and study is already provided at the National School for Magistrates.

144. According to the statistical data kept in the Hellenic Police Headquarters concerning cases of domestic violence, the Police Authorities investigated 117 cases in the year 2007 [since the entry into force of Law 3500/2006], whereas in the year 2008 they investigated 181 cases.

### **The fight against sexual exploitation of children**

145. Several legislative provisions introduce special measures with regard to criminal acts and violence against minors, such as the relevant provisions of Law 3625/2007, ratifying and implementing the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

146. Moreover, Law 3727/2008 ratified the Council of Europe Convention on the protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse and introduced the necessary domestic law provisions for the implementation of the engagements undertaken under the above convention.

147. New measures include stricter penalties against perpetrators, suspension of statute-barring until the victim comes of age, inapplicability of personal data protection provisions during the investigation of crimes against sexual freedom and economic exploitation of sexual life, crime prevention, awareness-raising and training, assistance to child victims, etc. More recently, Law 3860/2010 further updated and strengthened Greek legislation on

minors, taking into account the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (Beijing Rules).

**8. Combating trafficking in human beings (paras. 18 and 39 of the Committee's concluding observations)**

148. In 2010, prosecutions rose by 65%, convictions rose by 52%, and protection and assistance for victims identified by the Public Prosecutor, increased by 60%.

149. One of the most important challenges that Greece had to face was the lack of efficient cooperation among the different agencies, the fragmentation of responsibilities, a complex legislation, bureaucracy and inertia. The Government of the Hellenic Republic has gradually created a solid preventive, protective and prosecutorial framework. Greece has enhanced efforts to respond to the problem, including legislative reforms, inter-agency coordination among law enforcement, prosecution and judiciary, extensive protection to the victims, awareness raising campaigns, and systematic prosecution of criminal networks exploiting trafficked victims. Greece has also strengthened cooperation with relevant bodies within major international organisations and countries of origin, transit and destination, with encouraging results.

150. A National Coordination Mechanism (NCM), composed of representatives of all competent Ministries as well as the IOM, has been shaped and it is headed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The broader National and European Planning was presented in October 2010. The NCM will continue focusing on a four-pronged Action Plan based on four pillars: prosecution of the traffickers, protection of the victims, prevention, in particular through addressing the issue of demand and specialized training and awareness-raising campaigns, partnership among all relevant stakeholders, including NGOs.

151. The main areas of the NCM are the following: monitoring the phenomenon; establishing databases/ collection of statistics; screening procedures to identify victims; establishment of shelters; support to victims including legal assistance, granting of residence and work permits, voluntary repatriation; support in the countries of origin; educating police forces; educating law enforcement and judicial authorities; awareness raising campaigns.

152. In 2010, Greece ratified the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols – the “Palermo Convention” – and has signed the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings.

153. In December 2005, a Memorandum of Cooperation has been signed between the competent Ministries, IOM (International Organization for Migration) and 12 NGOs, which establishes a coordination framework of the interested stakeholders.

**(a) Protection of the victims of trafficking**

154. Presidential Decree 233/2003 determines the agencies, the measures and the ways and means of providing assistance to victims of trafficking, including in the fields of housing, healthcare and legal assistance. The status and situation of victims was further improved by Law 3386/2005, which foresees the issue of a residence permit, renewable under certain circumstances, to trafficking victims who cooperate with the competent authorities and prohibits expulsion during the “reflection period”. Law 3875/2010 (ratifying the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols) extends the scope of protective legislative measures to the victims of smuggling of immigrants and provides for the possibility of granting residence permits on humanitarian grounds, under certain circumstances, also to victims of trafficking who do not cooperate with the authorities due to the possible use of threats by perpetrators. It is to be noted that the recommendations of the National Commission for Human Rights have contributed to

the strengthening of the protection framework. During the period 2006-first quarter of 2010, stay permits have been granted to 102 victims of trafficking.

155. Furthermore, following a recent amendment of law 3386/2005 by law 3907/2011, recognized victims of trafficking who do not cooperate with the authorities are also entitled to a residence permit on humanitarian grounds. According to the same law, special care is provided to minors-victims of trafficking in human beings or smuggling of migrants who are unaccompanied minors. Thus the competent authorities should take the necessary measures in order to establish their identity and nationality and the fact that they are unaccompanied. They also make every effort to locate their families as quickly as possible and take the necessary steps immediately to ensure their legal representation including representation in criminal procedures. Third country nationals, recognized as victims of trafficking or victims of smuggling, are granted a residence permit upon decision of the Minister of Interior without any obligation to pay the fee. This permit is of one year duration and renewable if the victim continues to meet the same conditions under which the permit was submitted. For victims of trafficking who do not cooperate with the authorities this permit is renewable until the issuing of a court decision. The residence permit for victims of trafficking or of migrant smuggling ensures the right to health care and access to the psychological support services, access to the labor market, only for the period of its duration, as well as to the conditions of vocational training and education, according to the law. It is here worth mentioning, that the above mentioned residence permit may be renewed for one of the grounds provided for the migration law by decision of the General Secretariat of the relevant Region.

156. In addition, a residence permit for humanitarian reasons is being granted to adults, victims of domestic violence, or not able to handle their own affairs because of health problems or minors who need to be under protection measures and reside in boarding houses or charity institutions (art.44 par.1 c of law 3386/05).

157. Specific actions have also been implemented by the General Secretariat for Gender Equality.

158. Finally, assistance to victims is provided through the National Center for Social Solidarity of the Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity, which offers services such as counseling, psychological support, temporary hosting in shelters, a hotline etc. Programs have also been implemented by the Ministry of Labor and Social Security within the scope of the EU EQUAL Initiative.

**(b) Police action**

159. At the operational level, police action against traffickers has intensified and has yielded positive results. Seventeen (17) specialized anti-trafficking services are operating within the Hellenic Police, both at the central and the regional levels. Other actions include staff education and training, international cooperation, in particular with neighboring countries, exchange of information on organized crime (Interpol, Europol, SECI Center, EU Member States, neighboring and other third states), cooperation with foreign diplomatic authorities, etc. A Memorandum on Police Action and Best Practices for handling human trafficking cases has been sent to police services. Moreover, the Operational – Interagency Action Plan “Ilaeira” concerning the fight against trafficking in women and children is an important initiative which combines operational (police - judicial) action and the provision of assistance and protection to victims.

160. The Police Academy has already included the subject-matter of trafficking in human beings in all its grades. Police personnel attend vocational seminars and conferences organized by jointly competent organizations and NGOs on subjects related to victim

identification, dealing with victims, and, more generally, on issues pertaining to fruitful cooperation between the competent authorities for victim protection.

161. The Hellenic Police strive to inform the citizens about the dimensions of trafficking in human beings in Greece, so as to sensitize and increase their awareness, while creating a sense of safety caused by the presence of the Police.

162. Furthermore, it is possible to find more information on the Hellenic Police website ([www.astynomia.gr](http://www.astynomia.gr)) on issues of trafficking in human beings. Recently, information with guidelines and advice to trafficking victims has been added. Information documents and leaflets on trafficking and victims of trafficking have been distributed to all competent services.

163. The Hellenic Police services cooperate with NGOs through the National Centre for Social Solidarity (EKKA) of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare and the General Secretariat for Equality with the aim to provide support to victims as well as with the IOM for their safe repatriation.

164. Furthermore, two Public Prosecutors have been appointed in Athens in order to handle human trafficking cases, while awareness-raising and continuous training of judges on trafficking issues has been promoted.

**(c) Prevention of trafficking**

165. Greece is developing public awareness campaigns and training of all agencies involved with the aim of reducing demand for the services provided by the victims of trafficking and exploitation, and the General Secretariat for Gender Equality plays an active role in that.

**(d) Statistical data**

166. According to the latest statistical data, in the year 2011 the Services of the Hellenic Police dealt with 41 cases of trafficking in human beings (35 of them regarding sexual exploitation, 2 labour exploitation and 4 beggary). The researches and preliminary investigations led to accusations being brought against 220 alleged perpetrators of Greek and foreign nationality, while there were 97 victims (male – female & minors) of labour and sexual exploitation, out of which 51 sought for State assistance and protection which was also provided to them. Out of this total number, 9 were qualified by act of the competent Prosecutor as falling with the beneficial provisions of Law 3064/2002. Assistance and protection have also been provided to 8 women in pending cases and in accordance with the Palermo Protocol, which foresees the identification of victims of trafficking in human beings even though criminal charges have not been yet brought.

## **Article 11– Right to adequate housing**

### **1. The housing situation in Greece**

167. Generally speaking, there is no serious housing problem for the biggest part of Greeks and there are positive trends for stable improvement of housing conditions. In terms of self-owned residence, increase rates of the previous decades (2001: 79.7%, 2005: 78.7%) have become rather restraint.

168. However, here are certain categories of households in Greece, mostly poor people in urban and rural areas and economic immigrants, who, in their vast majority, live under unsatisfactory conditions or face unacceptable financial burdens which prevent them from being adequately housed.



## 2. The role of the Workers' Housing Organization

169. As mentioned in the initial Greek report, the Workers' Housing Organization (OEK), which was supervised by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, was the main body exercising social housing policy and providing residence to employees and pensioners of the country. The Workers' Housing Organization was financed by contributions of workers and their employers and provided housing assistance exclusively and solely to its beneficiaries without making any discrimination among its beneficiaries on the grounds of gender, race, religion, ethnic origin, age, sexual orientation or any other characteristic. Overall, measures have been taken since 2004, which further improved the benefits by the Workers' Housing Organization. Moreover, there has been an increase in the number of houses assigned directly every year to beneficiaries with acute social and economic needs, as well as to single mothers. More specifically, the development of the programmes for the years 2004-2008, was as follows:

Table 8

<i>Programme</i>		<i>2004</i>	<i>2005</i>	<i>2006</i>	<i>2007</i>	<i>2008</i>
1. Houses	Actioned	378	806	572	316	419
	Given by lot	2.104	987	273	326	484
	Completed-Given	787	570	664	454	404
	Expenditure	59.285.643	71.994.042	53.249.418	53.995.562	42.027.625
2. Interest Subsidy	Approvals	12.156	16.559	13.847	11.296	16.370
	Expenditure	42.177.538	57.697.614	81.735.390	104.748.041	157.926.521
3. No interest loans for house repairs-expansion or completion and Special Programme to beneficiaries with many children and beneficiaries with disability	Approvals	3.295	2.332	3.955	9864	7.889
	Expenditure	48.294.055	50.369.549	109.319.808	185.895.418	343.067.758
4. Rent Subsidy	Approvals	58.263	70.144	91.027	102.020	43.507
	Expenditure	72.445.201	57.697.336	151.942.702	183.609.904	155.640.154

170. The Workers' Housing Organization showed particular sensitivity with regard to beneficiaries' inability to pay the installments and did not evict its debtors in any case. In order to support cases where sudden incidents (unemployment, disease, etc.) prevent beneficiaries from effecting regular payments, it implemented the Special Solidarity Fund, a program in the context of which the Workers' Housing Organization covered the installments of the said beneficiaries to the Organization for one year.

171. It must be noted that, within the framework of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Memorandum of Understanding on Specific Economic Policy Conditionality, the Workers' Housing Organization as well as the Workers' Institute (OEE) have been abolished. Cabinet Decree No7/28-2-2012 implementing article 1 (6) of Law 4046/2012 stipulates that all competencies of the abolished organizations are transferred to and exercised by the OAED.

## 3. The fight against homelessness (see paras. 23, 45 of the Committee's concluding observations)

172. Since the profile of homelessness is changing constantly and all studies or efforts to measure homeless persons by various agencies differ from each other, in order to achieve a

more systematic and valid data collection by an official agency with a view to developing proper planning and programming for the implementation of homeless support and care programmes, the National Social Solidarity Centre (EKKA) has been entrusted with country-wide data collection for the year 2009, in association with the competent local authorities and other stakeholders (municipalities, church, NGOs etc.) on the basis of the relevant European methodologies.

173. Thus, in the context of this procedure, the data forwarded to date show 21,216 cases of people who live outside home in various forms (living on the street, in non-safe accommodation, in shelters or guesthouses etc.), as detailed in the table contained in Annex 3.

174. To combat the lack of accommodation as an issue of social exclusion, the Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity implements a wide range of measures and actions. A committee has been formed, composed by the National Social Solidarity Centre (EKKA) and other competent local authorities and stakeholders (municipalities, church, NGOs etc.), which has been entrusted with the planning and implementation of a country-wide data collection on the homeless, on the basis of the relevant European methodologies. It has also been given the task to elaborate a package of measures for the support of the homeless.

175. Within this context, most recently, the Greek Government recognized by law 4052/2012 the homeless as a special vulnerable group granted social protection.

#### **4. Vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in relation to housing**

176. Social Protection Programmes are implemented through the Local Government to combat poverty and to support households severely affected from unforeseen events (such as disasters etc.), so as for them to recover immediately and avoid homelessness. The level of one-off financial support to combat poverty increased in 2009 from 234.78 € to a maximum of 600 €. The level of the one-off financial support for households affected by disasters is 586,94 €, doubled in case of large families and families with disabled persons. Another 4.402 € is provided for persons disabled due to the disaster occurred.

177. The uninsured and the financially disadvantaged citizens are issued by the Local Governments a Sickness Insurance Carnet and Social Protection Certificates for hospital treatment and medical care. In 2010, 95.647 persons were served. More specifically, 27.434 new Sickness Insurance Carnets were issued, 64.811 carnets were validated and 3.402 Social Protection Certificates were issued.

178. A housing aid benefit is granted to the uninsured and financially disadvantaged senior citizens over 65 years and to the uninsured couples and financially disadvantaged senior citizens who prove to be deprived of accommodation and reside in a leased home. It is a housing benefit in the form of rent granted to the owner of the property. The monthly benefit amounts for uninsured single persons aged over 65 years and uninsured couples to 310 € in 2009, 335 € in 2010 and 362 € in 2011.

179. In order to effectively tackle the problems caused to persons hit by a calamity, the competent authority grants without delay tents and blankets for temporary accommodation as well as financial aid.

180. Offices of Social Supporting Services function in about 150 Municipalities throughout the country where supporting services are provided, aiming at fighting poverty and social exclusion.

181. The Directorate of Social Welfare and Social Solidarity of the Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity, and more specifically the Section of Refugees and Asylum Seekers Protection, is the designated National Responsible Authority of the European Refugee Fund. From the item 5216 on "Expenditure for providing food, sustenance and care to

political refugees” of the state budget, an amount of 2,265,000.000 € was granted in 2006, 1,977,500.00 € in 2007, 2,132,490.80 € in 2008, 2,401.182 € in 2009, 1.392.986,3 € in 2010 and 1.692.769,61 € in 2011.

182. The amount of the national participation (25%) in the European Refugee Fund was as follows:

Year 2006: 227,583.00 €, year 2007: 193,205.42 €, year 2008: 341,493.00 €, year 2009: 986.432,96 €, year 2010: 1.488.162,92€ and year 2011: 1.603.526.17 €.<sup>1</sup>

183. With regard to the housing of asylum-seekers and unaccompanied children, 17 accommodation structures are available throughout Greece, with a total capacity of 981 persons. Actions are included in relation to infrastructures or services intended for housing, provision of material support, medical care, social care or assistance in administrative and judicial actions, including the provision of legal assistance, taking into account the special needs of the most vulnerable groups. See the detailed Table in Annex 4.

184. Furthermore, since 2009, on an annual basis, Greece applies for the financing of Emergency Measures in accordance with the provisions of the decision establishing the ERF. The financing of Emergency Measures relates to “situations of particular pressure”. Such situations are characterized by “the sudden arrival at particular points on the borders of a large number of third-country nationals who may be in need of international protection, which place exceptionally heavy and urgent demands on the reception facilities, the asylum system or infrastructure of the Member State(s) concerned and may give rise to risks to human life, well-being or access to protection provided under Community legislation”.

185. The financing from the Fund for Emergency Measures is limited to 6 months and does not exceed 80% of the cost of each measure.

- Financing for 2008: €1,569,856.70 (20% national participation: €313,971.34).
- Financing for 2009: €386,110.00 (20% national participation: €77,222.00).
- Financing for 2010: € 7.125.988,40 (20% national participation: € 1.425.197.68).
- Financing for 2011<sup>2</sup>: € 4.687.500 (20% national participation: € 937.500).

For more details on projects related to the ERF, see Annex 5.

186. The main state agency of the social solidarity and information services network is the National Social Solidarity Center (EKKA, a legal entity of public law supervised by the Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity). EKKA’s purpose is to coordinate the social support services network for people, families and population groups that go through a strong emotional crisis or an emergency condition.

187. EKKA’s target groups are the following: Children and adolescents victims of abuse, neglect, abandonment, bullying and living under difficult conditions; runaway adolescents; minors victims of human trafficking; women victims of domestic violence, abuse, abandonment and illegal trafficking aiming at sexual or financial exploitation; women (alone or with their children) in crisis and in financial difficulty or in danger of social exclusion; adults and the elderly in need of immediate social care; adults and the elderly in crisis and extraordinary psychological or emotional state; victims of discrimination and social exclusion.

<sup>1</sup> The implementation of the 2011 ERF Annual Programme is still in progress. The above numbers account for the financial amount absorbed up to now.

<sup>2</sup> The implementation of 2011 Emergency Measures is still in progress. The above numbers account for the financial amount absorbed up to now.

188. EKKA's services do not target vulnerable groups encountering problems that require special therapeutic intervention, such as drug addicts, persons with HIV/AIDS and mentally ill persons. The main EKKA's services are the following:

(a) *Help Lines 197*. The Help Line 197 operates on a 24/7 basis, receives around 1600 calls per month and provides counseling and psychological support and information. The Emergency Social Protection Child Line '1107' operates on a 24/7 basis, aims at the social protection of the minors in danger and offers counseling and support to children, adolescents and parents.

(b) *Social Support Centres (KKS)*. They are established in the Prefectures of Attica and Thessaloniki, located in various municipalities and form the regional entry points into the system of immediate social care. For the list of the Social Support Centres operating in Attica and Thessaloniki, see Annex 6.

(c) *Crisis Management Service*. It intervenes in cases of unforeseen events (such as natural disasters) and accidents with a major number of victims. It offers social and psychological support to the victims or/and their relatives.

(d) *Immediate Social Intervention Service*. It includes three units:

- (i) On-the-spot intervention agency;
- (ii) The Agency's Reception-Guesthouse offering accommodation for a few days;
- (iii) Guesthouses offering accommodation for a few days to serious and emergency cases.

(e) *Shelters offering short-term accommodation*. The short-term accommodation Shelters offer temporary accommodation (lodging and care) to vulnerable groups of the population, such as adolescents, women victims of domestic violence, with or without children, and, more generally, women victims of violence, victims of trafficking with the purpose of exploitation and adults who find themselves in an emergency situation. Besides accommodation, the Shelters provide the beneficiaries, during their stay, with counseling and psychological support by specialized personnel.

(f) *Social Shelters for the Homeless*. There are two Shelters in Athens with a capacity of 100 beds. There is also another Shelter operated by the Greek Red Cross with a capacity of 80 beds. The National Center for Social Solidarity participates offering the building while the Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity finances the project. The Guesthouses cooperate with the Social Support Centers of the region in which they are situated and with other public or private bodies engaged in the same field (Local Government Organizations, NGOs, Non-Profit Organizations, etc) in order to find the most appropriate, feasible solution to the problems of the persons concerned. More specifically, 6 guesthouses operated in 2008 at the National Social Solidarity Centre, one for short-term accommodation and five for long-term accommodation (up to 6 months).

(g) *Counseling/Therapeutic Project dealing with domestic violence*. The "criminal mediation" special counseling/therapeutic project has been implemented since 2007, in Athens and Thessaloniki, as provided for in the Law 3500/2006 on combating domestic violence. For a list of relevant programmes, see Annex 7.

(h) *Service for the management of Accommodation Requests of Asylum Seekers and Unaccompanied Minors*.

(i) *Operational Center* for the support and coordination of welfare actions of the Child Protection Network Services.

(j) *Finally*, EKKA has been assigned as the competent authority to implement the Subproject “Expertise for the Operational Development Plan of the National Support Programme and Care for the Homeless”.

189. Legal entities of public and private law (including churches, NGOs etc) were funded by the Special State Lottery for purposes of social benefits to persons being in a state of emergency (poor, homeless, etc.).

190. The Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity, in the context of the People’s Housing Programme, concedes houses owned by it to families with housing problems.

**5. Greek Roma and the right to adequate housing (paras. 11, 21, 22, 44 of the Committee’s concluding observations)**

191. Greek Roma have declared themselves an integral part of the Greek population; they are Greek citizens of no disputed or questioned legal status and enjoy full citizenship rights, as well as all civil and political, economic, social and cultural rights. They further participate in mainstream political parties and are equally entitled to establish political parties; they effectively exercise electoral rights and hold elected posts, particularly at local Government Structures, organize themselves in collective bodies at the Local and Central Level and participate in public life. Furthermore, with respect to their community’s particular life style and needs, but also due to further adverse living conditions resulting in effect to a limited access to the economic, social and civil rights provided by the Constitution to all Greek citizens, Roma have been recognized as a socially vulnerable group of the Greek population, for the support of which additional proactive measures have been necessitated to offset all forms of social exclusion or potential discrimination faced by them.

192. An Integrated Action Plan (IAP) for the social integration of Greek Roma had been adopted in 2002, aiming at combating social exclusion and discrimination. The Program had been adopted, in particular, as an action plan for the implementation of comprehensive, national planning for Greek Roma. When adopted, the national plan incorporated the conclusions of the social dialogue held in the ’90s on the problems faced by Roma.

193. In fact, the IAP provided the Local Authorities with a common set of goals and framework of actions for the improvement of Roma living conditions upon cooperation of Central and Local Government, in the main areas of housing, employment, education, health and culture-sports. In this context, the Ministry of Interior undertook the implementation of the infrastructure axis interventions, with a view to improving Greek Roma’ living conditions through, in particular, financing basic infrastructure projects but also, in cooperation with the interventions provided within the services’ axis, in the field of education, health, employment and culture - sports. The programming period of the Integrated Action Plan covered a six year time framework (2002-2008), during which basic infrastructure projects (road construction, electricity & lighting, sewerage, water supply, improvement of settlements, infrastructure works for prefabricated houses, relocation of settlements and purchase of tracts of land) were planned, upon proposal of the Local Authorities, for 96 municipalities with Greek Roma living in substandard conditions. Since 2002, 94.9 million euro has been allocated from the state budget for basic infrastructures in several Roma settlements. Payments for infrastructure works processed so far amount to 57.58 million euro.

194. Additionally, the improvement of Roma living conditions has been supported by the IAP axis on the provision of services through, in particular, the establishment of 33 socio-medical centers, providing Roma with a number of services in the field of counseling and family planning, primary health care with special care for women and children, mediation

while addressing public administration to settle all kinds of possible issues (including civil and municipal issues) and vocational guidance.

195. In parallel, non-eligible rehabilitation issues under the infrastructure scope of the IAP led in 2002 to the adoption of a mortgage program for Greek Roma. Upon favorable mortgage terms, and guaranteed by the state budget, the program addressed in particular 9.000 Roma families. So far, a total of 7.854 loans have been approved (87,3%) to an equal number of Roma families. Respectively, the number of beneficiary families to have initiated or concluded the construction phase (through housing loan contracts) amounts nowadays to 6.570 families (83,7%).

196. Following a major legislative reform<sup>3</sup> of the program in 2006 the allocation of housing loans has since been based on social assessment criteria taking into consideration Roma families' particular living conditions. Ever since, the program provides for priority housing by means of mortgage for those who, being further burdened by conditions of social adversity, experience intense social exclusion. In effect, the new procedure provided for the application of social assessment criteria giving priority to the number of dependents in candidate families (minor children, adult students, dependents- ascending first degree relatives), possible existence of disabilities, single parent families, single parent widowed families and low income. On the same time, taking into account the practical difficulties for effective access of Roma to public authorities and eventually, to the services provided by them, the institutional framework in force eliminated the requirements on candidates' permanent residence and set the conditions for participatory procedures during the assessment procedure (assessment committees at the local level with the participation of Roma representatives). The program was further amended in 2011 in order to better adjust to the current socio-economic conditions by providing Roma beneficiaries - inter alia - with financial incentives in relation to the repay of the loan and the state grants; a more flexible timeframe in relation to the construction of the houses and the disbursal of the loan; and an extended timeframe for signing a loan contract with a bank. Additional amendments introduced envisage, overall, the safeguard of the program's social character and scope, as well as the facilitation of beneficiaries' ability to respond to the obligations undertaken through or during the mortgage, in line with recommendations made by the Ombudsman and inquiries placed by the Roma too.

197. However, remaining problems in (remote settlements or in) settlements not meeting adequate standards need to be further addressed as recommended by the National Commission for Human Rights and the Ombudsman on the basis of available funds and prioritisation of Roma living standards and needs.

198. Taking into consideration the need to promote gender equality, mainly to strengthen Roma women's participation in public-social life (through, in particular housing priority credits awarded to single-parent families since mid 2006), the following data have been revealed upon completion of the first implementation phase of the program (2002-2005): 39% of the applications received were submitted by women. On the same time, among successful beneficiaries in 2005, Roma women formed 37% of the beneficiaries' share. Likewise, following the legislative reform in 2006, in terms of priority given to Roma women, their share (successful beneficiaries) has increased in 2009 to 56%, whereas men's share has decreased to 38% from 63% in 2005. A comparative review of the quantitative results of the program during the two implementation phases reveals that women's share has increased to 42% whereas male beneficiaries have decreased to 57%. Detailed figures are presented in Annex 3a, charts 2; 2a; 2b; 2b.1.

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<sup>3</sup> Joint Ministerial Decision 33165/23.06.2006 of the Ministers of Interior, Economy and Finance (OG780/B).

199. On this occasion, although outside the scope of this particular program, it is worth mentioning that with a view to support the need for the emancipation and empowerment of a particular sub-group within the greater target-group, that of Roma women, both within the Greek society and in Europe, the Ministry of Interior co-organised with the Council of Europe and the Rom Inter-municipal Network (Pan-Hellenic Network for the support of Greek Roma), the 2nd International Conference of Roma Women entitled “I am a European Roma Woman” which took place in Athens (11-12/01/2010).

200. Respectively, focusing on the need to protect the rights of the child and on the basis of the supporting documents submitted in the context of the revised application procedure, it is witnessed that out of a total of 2.105 beneficiary families during the period 2006-2009 (implementation phase b) a total of 91% of the beneficiaries (1.921 families) responded to the criterion “family with children” comprising in total 6.726 children. The above figures during the revised procedure confirm effective priority to family and childhood protection.

201. In further detail, it is noted that during 2006-2009, 59,29% of the beneficiaries correspond to families headed by a woman (compared with 37% in 2002-2005) and respectively 40,7% of the beneficiaries correspond to families headed by a man (compared with 63% in 2002-2005). Further analysis of the beneficiary families indicates that 47% of the beneficiary families are single-parent families (regardless of the reason) with a total of 42% of the children in beneficiary families, the great majority of whom (88,12%) are families headed by a woman (868 families out of a total of 985 single parent families with 2.848 children out of a total of 6.726). It should be clarified, however, that families who have concluded a “Roma” wedding are surveyed through the single-parent families’ sample.

202. In light of the figures presented above it is to be concluded that in an attempt to adjust the program to the particular needs of the target-group, the eventual implementation of social assessment criteria strengthened significantly the sub-groups within the wider target-group of the Roma community, in particular women and children.

203. Furthermore, the evaluation of the supporting documents submitted during the revised application procedure indicates that the need to file an application (for participating in the program) offered the incentive for registering with the municipal rolls as well as for the issuance of any other necessary certificate such as identity card (consequently, birth certificates as well) copies of tax returns etc. In that sense, the project contributed, although indirectly, to the mobilization of the population group in focus, in order to arrange civil and municipal issues as well as, on the long-run, to the establishment of informed “individual conscience”, regarding access to existing, necessary services. Furthermore, their “need” for being informed on the progress of their application and more specifically to comply with the requirements on housing “obliged”<sup>4</sup> them to access directly the competent public authorities, both at local and central level.

204. For those not registered with the municipal registries (a pre-condition for the registration on the electoral rolls), due to lack of certain documents, particular circulars were issued by the Ministry of Interior. Under the current strategic reform, remaining issues on civic status are further elaborated taking into consideration the recommendations made by independent authorities in Greece, such as the Ombudsman and the National Commission for Human Rights.

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<sup>4</sup> The term is used in the sense of their need to have effective access to the rights deriving from the specific project.

205. Moreover, upon completion of the programming time-frame of the IAP for the social integration of Greek Roma (2002 – 2008), the effective address of social exclusion still suffered by the Roma has initiated an overall effort for coordinated administrative reform.

206. Following the 2010 legal reform on local and regional authorities' responsibilities ("Kallikratis Program"), a Department for Social Affairs has been established at the regional level, charged inter alia with the facilitation of housing rehabilitation issues for traveller communities at the local level (provision of suitable places for settlement/stopping facilities), notably within the context of field national policies. The provision lies within the greater context of the responsibilities assigned to the Decentralised Administration, notably to the newly established Directorate for Civic Status Issues and Social Affairs, with emphasis being placed on social cohesion and solidarity issues at the decentralised level.

207. Further, acknowledging that social integration is a multi-fold process operated at several levels of the administration but also the civil society and with view to ensure cooperation at the local level, the Ministry of Interior proceeded in 2010 to a public call, addressing all authorities and bodies involved in the social integration of Roma (or operating in the field of Roma rights), in order to collect information (as well as possible quantitative data) on initiatives that have been undertaken in the past and are planned in the future. In 2012, a second call addressed particularly the Regions of the Country in view of the National Strategic Reference framework. The aim is that any measure undertaken, in particular at the local level, whether by local authorities or the civil society, including grassroots Roma NGOs, should serve the set goals within a greater strategic framework, so that field policies are not subverted. The need for a coordinated administrative intervention at the local and central level, and the ensuing need for addressing effectively long-lasting issues Roma are faced with in the fields of housing, education, employment, health care and, all in all, towards their integration into the society, has led to a new strategic framework for Roma in Greece. A wide range of crucial questions are reviewed in this direction. The establishment of specific procedural and legislative guarantees with emphasis being placed on unlawful evictions<sup>5</sup> as well as the principal prerequisite on synergy on behalf of the bodies involved in terms of rational planning, including Roma participation, are among these examined in order to safeguard equal access to fundamental rights. Focusing on addressing the deficits of the past operational period, special emphasis is given –as recommended by the NCHR and the Ombudsman- to the fragmentation of actions, the lack of a systematic monitoring and adequate targeting of the interventions upheld based on the priorities set by different needs of the target group at the local level. To this end, the development of local integrated interventions turns to a major component of the new strategic framework and its holistic approach, since full access to civil, social and political rights is processed on the basis of the living conditions and the differentiated needs, at the local but also social dimension of the community they live at. In practice, this assumes prioritisation of the different needs of the Roma population as

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<sup>5</sup> As regards the elimination of unlawful evictions, the Ministry of Interior placed a concrete proposal during the drafting of the new Strategy Framework, particularly within the course of supportive legislative measures to be adopted for assisting and also improving the implementation of individual projects to be undertaken. The scheme under examination proposes the adoption of concrete procedural guarantees in terms of adequate prior notice, provision of alternative settlement, consultation with those affected, respect of possible extreme conditions, as well as that an eviction is treated as a last resort. The overall context will be further elaborated in cooperation with the competent Ministries, particularly with regard to additional legal remedies or the improvement of accessibility to those existing.



assessed through a new tool developed particularly to this end (database<sup>6</sup> on the living conditions of Roma to be updated at the local level).

208. Additional questions such as the development of the civil and municipal situation of the population to a major question and priority issue in accordance too with the recommendations of the Ombudsman and other advisory to the administration bodies (National Commission for Human Rights), as well as supplementary interventions on culture and awareness raising of the majority population and the target group in question, are equally addressed within this greater effort. The “dosta!” campaign of the Council of Europe launched in Greece in 2011 is particularly expected to contribute a lot to awareness raising purposes of the greater population as well as to the essential combating of discrimination and existing prejudices against Roma on the basis of all possible dimensions of social exclusion rather than on diverse identification such as on ethnicity or racial origin.

209. Finally, it is worth mentioning that Roma representatives participate in central government’s structures responsible for the implementation of Roma programs. Further to that it should be recalled that cooperation with central administration on Roma issues is also pursued through the Pan-Hellenic network of municipalities (ROM Net) holding Roma population. The network has been established upon local authorities’ initiative and encompasses Roma participation too in its administrative structures.

#### **6. Police action in relation to “forced evictions” of Roma (paras. 21, 32 and 42 of the Committee’s concluding observations)**

210. The Sanitary Provision A5/696/83 as amended by the similar provision No. 2361/2003 regulates the settlement of itinerant persons, inter alia persons of Roma origin. The Hellenic Police is responsible for controlling the existence of the relevant authorization. Illegal settlement is considered as an offence. Health and Police Services, as well as the Municipal Police, where existent, are competent for monitoring compliance with the aforementioned provisions.

211. Police competence in the said matter consists, as already mentioned, in controlling whether the relevant settlement authorization has been issued as well as in providing lawful assistance, within the framework of articles 159 and 161 of Presidential Decree 141/1991, whenever requested, for the eviction from public, municipal or private areas of illegally settled itinerant persons.

212. In general, the Hellenic Police Headquarters have underlined, through relevant orders to all regional Services, the duty of police officers to show good behavior towards all citizens, to respect the latter’s personality and rights and to ensure equal treatment without racial, ethnic or any other kind of discrimination in accordance, inter alia, with article 5, paragraphs 3 and 4 of Presidential Decree 254/2004, “Code Of Police Ethics”.

213. The protection of the rights of persons of Roma origin and the elimination of any kind of racist behavior against them are issues of principle for Greek Police Headquarters. When dealing with issues related to Roma, the police authorities involved manifest a particular sensibility, bearing in mind that Roma belong to a vulnerable social group.

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<sup>6</sup> Following the 2008 study on the assessment of the IAP, the data extracted from the replies local councils on the current situation of Roma are further updated through an internet application which has been developed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security General Secretariat for the Management of Community and Other Resources, in order to present a full, properly documented picture of the existing situation, in order to ensure that the interventions to be held in the context of the National Strategy for Roma 2012 – 2020 are as effectively targeted as possible.

214. Following a circular order to all Services in 2004, the use of derogatory terms (for example the term “athiganos”) was prohibited in correspondence, written announcements and oral statements of Police Services and their personnel.

215. Great importance is attached to the personnel’s training and continuous training on matters of human rights protection. Furthermore, strict provisions have been enacted in the Disciplinary Regulations of Police Personnel for the punishment of offensive behaviors, on one hand, and, on the other hand, for the speediest possible examination and hearing of the disciplinary offences concerned.

216. An important recent development is the adoption of Law 3938/2011 which established, within the Ministry of Citizens’ Protection, an Office, subject to the Minister, responsible for handling alleged instances of abuse. The aim of the Office is to review in an effective manner instances of ill-treatment of individuals or violations of human dignity by police officers. The mission of the Office is to collect, register, assess and further refer for investigation complaints about acts of Police, Coast Guard and Fire Brigade officers in the exercise of their duties or in abuse of their officers’ status. Furthermore, it will investigate cases for which a violation has been found by the European Court of Human Rights.

## **7. Measures to combat poverty (paras. 20, 41)**

### **(a) Indicators for measuring poverty**

217. In Greece, as in the other member states of the European Union, progress as to combating poverty and social exclusion may be assessed through a list of indicators in the sector of Social Exclusion and Poverty, as agreed upon at a European level.

### **(b) Regarding the absence of poverty line**

218. In Greece, as in the other member states of the European Union, 60% of the ‘national median income’ is normally used in the above-mentioned statistical surveys as the threshold below which a person is considered to be at a risk of poverty<sup>7</sup>. It should be clarified that this limit is used for statistical purposes and should not be confused with corresponding statutory administrative criteria (as the case may be).

### **(c) Targets for combating poverty in Greece**

219. In the framework of the European Strategy EU2020, the European Council (June 2010) confirmed the quantitative target objective of EU for the promotion of social integration and the reduction of poverty. The indicators that are used for the monitoring of the target are a) at-risk-of poverty rate, b) material deprivation rate and c) people living in jobless households.

220. In the above framework, Greece has set three national targets:

- Reducing the number of people at risk of poverty and/or social exclusion by 450.000 by 2020. This is translated into a reduction of the at-risk-of poverty and/or exclusion rate from 28% in 2008 to 24% in 2020;
- Reducing the number of children and young people (0-17years old) at-risk-of poverty by 100.000 until 2020, which is translated into a reduction of at-risk-of poverty rate for children (0-17) from 23% in 2008 to 18% in 2020;

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<sup>7</sup> It must be noted that the more appropriate term ‘risk of poverty’ has been chosen instead of ‘poverty’ during use of such indicators (due to the multi-dimensional phenomenon of poverty that is not exhausted by the assessment through individual *economic* indicators).

- Building a “social safety net” against social exclusion, which includes access for citizens to basic services, such as medical care, housing and education is a priority, especially during the crisis.

**(d) The situation in Greece – Statistical Evaluation**

221. On the basis of available statistical data, no major changes are observed in the recent years. Nevertheless, austerity measures may have a negative impact on poverty and social exclusion, even if it is not yet reflected in the existing data.

222. The last available statistical data show that the poverty risk in Greece in 2010 is 20.1% [19.7% in 2009, 20.1% in 2008 and 20.3% in 2007] in comparison to 16.4% in EU-27/[Annex 2, Table 5]. Moreover, the relative poverty gap<sup>8</sup> is 23.4% in 2010[Annex 2, Table 10] in comparison to 23.1% in EU-27. As far as it concerns the people at poverty risk or social exclusion (EU 2020 Target), 27.7% of the population in Greece are at risk of poverty or social exclusion versus 23.5% of the population in the EU27.[Annex 2, Table3].

223. Children aged 0-17 years face a high risk of poverty. The poverty of children has increased significantly in comparison to previous years (21,5% in 2003, 20,5% in 2004, 20,4% in 2005, 22,6% in 2006)[Annex 2, Table 9]. For age group 0-17 years the percentage of poverty risk is 23% in 2008, 23,7% in 2009 and 23% in 2010 while the percentage of children at risk of poverty/or social exclusion is 28.7% in 2008, 30.0% in 2009 and 28.7% in 2010.[Annex 2, Table 4] As far as the child poverty is concerned, it should be mentioned that the majority of the poor children live in working poor households, while at the same time the number of poor children living in jobless households is increasing.

224. Another crucial aspect is the percentage of the poor workers, who constitute 13.8% of the total population, 10.2% being women and 16.4% men. [Annex 2, Table 14]. No major change has been observed in the last decade Moreover, if we take into consideration that the main reason for the existence of poor children is parents' poverty, it is not possible to achieve a significant reduction of poverty in Greece without dealing with workers' poverty.

225. Unemployed persons (38,5% in 2010) face a high poverty risk, which has substantially increased since 2006 [Annex 2, Table 12].

226. Old age is still one of the aggravating factors of poverty risk in Greece. For people aged 65+, the poverty risk is 21.3% in 2010/[Annex 2, Table 6] while for pensioners the rate is slightly lower (19% in 2010)/[Annex 2, Table 12]. However, this rate presents a gradual decrease (25,6% in 2006, 22,9% in 2007, 22.3% in 2008, 21,4% in 2009) and this may be due to the progress achieved over the last years with respect to income support of the elderly. We should note that gender is a very aggravating factor for older women, 23,3% versus 18,8% (in 2010) of poverty risk for men.

227. The limited effectiveness and efficiency of social transfers other than pensions also constitutes a major issue. The at-risk-of-poverty rate before social transfers other than pensions is 23.8% [Annex 2, Table 8] while the at-risk-of poverty rate after social transfers is 20.1% (in 2010) [Annex 2, Table 6]. Nevertheless, it should be stressed that social transfers in the form of pensions for people age 65+ are quite redistributive in Greece: pensions reduce the poverty rate by 19 percentage points /from 42.8% before all social transfers including pensions to 23.8% before social transfers other than pensions [Annex 2, Table 7, Table 8].

<sup>8</sup> The poverty gap ('depth') refers to the income status of persons below poverty line and is calculated as the difference between the poverty line and median equivalent available income of the poor, as a percentage of poverty line.

228. The categories with the highest poverty rates include also single-parent families. Poverty risk is 33,4% in 2010, higher than the rate of the previous year (32.1% in 2009). Poverty risk in large families is 26,7% in 2010, presenting a decrease of 2% in comparison to 2009 (28.6%)/[Annex 2, Table 13]. For further statistical data, please, see Statistical Annex for Article 11.

**(e) Policy measures**

229. Many austerity measures have been adopted (and others are foreseen) by the government under the framework of the Greek Memorandum of Economic and Financial Policies, the medium term fiscal strategy 2012-2015, as well as the Second Economic Adjustment Programme (2012). These measures are referred (among others) to: tax reforms, wage bill reductions, pension reductions, reduction of public allowances, elimination of the 13th and the 14th wage payments for all public employees, increase of V.A.T (it has also been announced that there will be an increase in the VAT of domestic fuel, which is also expected to have negative consequences on poverty level), special solidarity contribution (on wages/salaries and pensions), special levy on property, cut in social benefits (e.g. benefit for large family have become means-tested, family benefits for public sector employees are limited from November 2011), reduction of minimum wages and unemployment benefits. All these measures, in combination with the increasing unemployment rate in Greece, have negative consequences on citizens' income and may increase poverty.

230. National policy has a double orientation: to limit the social impact of the economic crisis with targeted measures in the short term and to reform the national social policy system so that it can be adequate, effective and sustainable in the long term. Severely affected by the economic crisis and the implementation of fiscal adjustment measures, Greece is facing a major challenge: to build a social net against poverty and social exclusion, particularly for the next few years with a number of targeted measures to the unemployed, the most vulnerable and the people at risk of poverty (so as to limit the impact of the crisis). This "social safety net" against social exclusion, includes access to basic services, such as medical care, housing and education, as a matter of priority, during the crisis. As the most effective tool in fighting poverty is employment, building inclusive labour markets is a priority for the Hellenic strategy.

231. The Ministry of Labour and Social Security, in order to respond to the challenges of the economic crisis, aims at:

- Creating more favourable conditions for employment (by legislative interventions and implementation of structural reforms (regarding Flexible forms of employment, Labour cost reduction, Collective bargaining flexibility, fighting against undeclared work);
- Tackling unemployment and promoting employment through Employment Policies;
- Limiting the social consequences of the crisis (by reinforcing the social dimension of the Operational Programme "Human Resources Development /2007-2013" by emphasizing the growth of social economy, the implementation of completed social integration policies for the vulnerable groups of population and the reduction of poverty).

232. The main reforms and measures regarding tackling poverty and social exclusion for 2010, 2011 and 2012 are presented below<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> Source: *Hellenic National Reform Programme 2012-2015, Report on the progress towards*

(i) *Measures to limit the social consequences of the crisis*

233. Measures to limit the social consequences of the crisis especially for the most vulnerable<sup>10</sup> as well as to promote their social integration are implemented:

- Promotion of social economy with the implementation of new legislation (law 4029/2011[“Social Economy and Social Entrepreneurship and other provisions”, Official Gazette A 216A/30.9.2011];
- Employment programmes for the socially vulnerable groups implemented by the Greek Manpower Organisation (OAED);
- Social work programmes;
- Regional integrated programmes for the support of employment (TOPSA);
- Local actions of social inclusion for socially vulnerable groups;
- Establishment of an inter-ministerial working group to address the rapidly deteriorating homelessness problem.

234. Additionally there are about to be implemented:

- Establishment of the Social Economy Fund;
- Subsidy Programme for Social Enterprises [Law 4052/2012];
- National Network for instant social intervention for social inclusion and the support of the most vulnerable;
- Targeted Training Programmes for persons with disabilities and for former substance users.

235. Additionally, in order to increase the effectiveness of social programmes and better coordination between Ministries, agencies and local government, there are reforms concerning: the functional review of social programmes (in collaboration with OECD); the management and operation of the social security system through the establishment of an interministerial cooperation scheme for monitoring and assessing social inclusion & protection policies; the administrative restructuring of ministries.

236. Within the framework of tackling child poverty and the promotion of children’s rights, a preparatory process is underway which will lead to the development of a long-term strategy. The main axes are: a) supporting parents’ employment, b) ensuring access for children and their families to services, in order to cover basic needs and upgrading their quality of life, c) upgrading institutions and services with the ultimate goal for social inclusion of all children.

237. There is a Pilot Programme, “Provision of integrated local support and care services for poor families with children in four municipalities” (funding: 50% national sources; 50% European Economic Area Financial Mechanism), with a budget of €1.200.000, offering support through measures for the care of children and support of their parents in order to eradicate persistent poverty and deprivation through the creation of 4 centres that provide support services for children.

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*Europe 2020’ April 2012.*

<sup>10</sup> More specifically, Law 3845/2010 “*Measures for the application of the support mechanism for the Greek economy by euro area Member States and the International Monetary Fund*” provides authorisation by presidential decrees, in order for all necessary extraordinary measures to be taken for the confrontation of special needs of the poor and vulnerable groups of population living under disadvantaged social conditions such as unemployment, old age, social exclusion, lack of income.

(ii) *Social protection and access to essential services*

a. Pension Reform

238. Major reforms with regards to the pension system have been introduced such as the Law 3863/2010 “New Pension System and related arrangements, regulation in the employment relationships” aiming at a sustainable, socially just and adequate pension system: the gradual equalization of the old-age pension requirements for all insurance funds, the establishment of a more rational system of calculating pensions; the introduction of demographic considerations in the old-age pension-age requirement; a Pensioners’ Solidarity Contribution, applicable on high pensions.

239. According to Law 3863/2010 a basic minimum pension for all as of 2015 is introduced. By 2015 there will be a basic pension of €360 for all and one analogical, which will be won by every single worker with years of experience.

b. Better access to medical care

240. According to Law 3996/2011[“Restructuring of the Labour Inspectorate (SEPE) and regulations of social insurance issues”, article 35, as amended by Article 138, N.4052/2012, access to medical and pharmaceutical services to the unemployed is extended until December 31, 2012 while special requirements for medical care coverage are defined in the case of people with very low work intensity.

c. ‘Help at home’ programme

241. New legislation aims at ensuring the continuation of this successful programme.

d. Special prices for the unemployed (initiated by OAED)

242. More than 1,500 businesses and shops are offering products and services at special prices for the unemployed.

(iii) *Financial support (One- off allowances)*

243. In the framework of targeted actions and in an attempt to deal with the current economic crisis, the Greek authorities distributed at the beginning of 2009 a ‘special social cohesion allowance’ to long-term unemployed persons, low income pensioners and categories of disabled persons (Law 3746/2009, “Deposits and Investments Guarantee Fund...”, article 90).

244. By virtue of Law 3808/2009 [“Extraordinary social solidarity economic support, extraordinary social solidarity contribution of highly profitable companies and highly valued real estate and other laws”] a ‘social solidarity allowance’ is provided in order to support the families of salaried employees, pensioners and farmers who have a very low income as well as vulnerable social groups (after satisfying certain income and/ or social criteria), amounting from 300 up to 1300 euros, in two equal doses Nevertheless, only the first one had been distributed.

245. According to Law 3896/2010 [Implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation ..., 8.12.2010”], an ‘extraordinary financial support’ is provided in order to support the low pension earners who are over 60 years old (after satisfying certain income criteria), amounting from 100 up to 300 euros.

## Article 12 – Right to health

### 1. Public hygiene

246. In relation to the actions in the field of Public Hygiene:

- Law 3370/2005 on the “Organisation and operation of public health services and other provisions” has been issued.
- The National Strategic Public Health Action Plan 2008-2013 has been elaborated.
- The competent Agency of the Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity grants vaccines to the Prefectural Governments of the country, for the free vaccination coverage of itinerant populations as well as the poor and the uninsured.
- The vaccination against Hepatitis B has been included in the National Vaccination Programme by virtue of a relevant Sanitary Provision.
- To combat hepatitis C, public information campaigns have been organized by the Disease Control and Prevention Centre (KEELPNO).
- There has been an increase in the nutrition benefit to kidney patients and regulation of issues in relation to the institutional framework of granting the above benefit.
- By virtue of a 2007 Joint Ministerial Decision, as amended in 2008, the nutrition benefit of the kidney patients has been extended to patients who have undergone a heart, liver, lungs and bone marrow transplantation.
- In the framework of the promotion of breastfeeding in Greece, a National Breastfeeding Committee was established in 2005. With the consent of the National Committee, an epidemiological research was carried out by the Institute of Child’s Health, with the purpose of reflecting the existing situation as regards breastfeeding in Greece and the factors that affect it. In 2006, breastfeeding officials were appointed in the hospitals that have Maternity and Neonatal Units. Every year, training seminars take place aiming at raising awareness in health workers and the public in breastfeeding issues. The Institute of Child Health implements a program for baby-friendly hospitals.

### 2. Prohibition of smoking (paras. 25, 47 of the Committee’s concluding observations)

247. Greece ratified the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control by Law 3420/2005. At the same time, in the context of our country’s harmonization with the EU framework, a Joint Ministerial Decree on the advertising and sponsorship of tobacco products was issued in 2005, in compliance with the European Directive 33/2003/EC, prohibiting the advertising and the promotion of tobacco products in the press and the print media, the radio, the services of the information society and through sponsorships connected with tobacco that have a cross-border impact, including the free distribution of tobacco products.

248. From 2004 to date, the Ministry of Health has distributed information leaflets on tobacco and alcohol to the Ministry of National Education, which were distributed to school students in the context of health education courses.

249. Furthermore, in the years 2004-2008, systematic information of the public was realized using leaflets and audiovisual material both at the central and the regional level. Wide publicity was given to World Days against Tobacco (May 31<sup>st</sup>).

250. Finally, Law no. 3730/2008 on the protection of juveniles against tobacco and alcohol was issued with the purpose of taking measures to deal with the impacts of tobacco

on health, or otherwise the passive smoking. A total ban of smoking in public and private workplaces has been legislated.

### **3. National nutrition policy**

251. In relation to the prevention of child obesity, the Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity, aiming at protecting the sensitive student population of primary and secondary education, issued, in 2006, a Sanitary Provision “On hygiene rules and the definition of products that are distributed by public and private schools buffets” as well as a related explanatory circular. The purpose of the aforementioned Ministerial Decision is to take measures to protect Public Health, to deal with obesity and diet-related chronic diseases, through the creation of a school buffet that will operate as a training means of practical application of healthy diet principles. The list of the aforementioned Sanitary Provision was based on the instructions and recommendations of international organizations (W.H.O. and UNICEF) and recognized scientific child organizations in Greece and abroad.

252. At the same time, a National Committee of Nutrition Policy was set up by a 2005 Ministerial Decision of the Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity. The Committee’s task is to 1) constantly make proposals to implement the nutrition policy, and 2) conduct a sophisticated process for a national action plan on nutrition and obesity. In 2010, the National Committee for Greek Nutrition was established, with the aim of submitting proposals on measure and policies to promote Greek nutrition; the Committee has already made proposals on the prevention of child obesity.

253. Finally, the Strategy and Policy Unit of the Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity has elaborated a National Action Plan on healthy nutrition and nutrition disorders, which consists of four axes: prevention – promotion of healthy nutrition options, timely diagnosis and therapy, intersectoral cooperation for a national nutrition policy, scientific support, monitoring and evaluation.

254. In addition, in the framework of the research activity in relation to nutrition in our country, we are noting that significant sources of data that allow the evaluation of the nutrition situation of the Greek population are the databases of DAFNE projects (Data Food Networking) which were launched in the beginning of the ‘90s and EPIK (European Medicine and Society Project), launched in 1994.

255. In the framework of children’s and adolescents’ information on health and prevention issues, the Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity has launched, as of December 2007, a special information and sensitization project called “Life has colour” including also issues of healthy nutrition.

256. In 2007, the public was informed on the matter of vaccinations with the repeated broadcasting of TV messages by TV stations of nationwide and regional range. During the period 2004-2008, health education leaflets were widely distributed on oral health, proper diet, diabetes, prevention of gynecological cancers, family planning, etc. Finally, during the above period, many scientific events were carried out under the auspices of the Ministry and were sponsored (congresses, meetings, exhibitions, etc.) with a wide range of issues of preventive medicine and hygiene.

### **4. Mental health (paras. 24 and 46 of the Committee’s concluding observations)**

#### **(a) Mobile Mental Health Units**

257. The mission of the Mobile Units is to provide prevention and hospital treatment services at home in areas facing specific problems of access to mental health services. In the framework of the project of reform of mental health services (“Psychargos”) 27 mobile units have been developed.



258. The financing of Mental Health Units appears typically reduced in 2012 by 50% in comparison to 2009 (80 million Euros) due to the fact that the available budget is 40 million Euros. Nevertheless the remaining amount will be covered by means of 2% deduction on the amount which regards Health Sector procurement.

**(b) Involuntary hospitalization**

259. Three basic elements of the relevant legislation should be highlighted: the obligation to protect the patient's dignity during involuntary hospitalization, the definition of the terms of subjection to involuntary hospitalization, the judicial control of the involuntary hospitalization's procedure.

260. In addition to the above the Control Committee for the protection of the rights of persons with mental health disorders has been reestablished and will also monitor the involuntary hospitalization issue. Finally a research regarding the potential need for changes in the legislation so as to fully secure the protection of persons with mental health problems is in progress by the Mental Health Department.

**5. Disease Control and Prevention Centre Actions (HCDCP)**

261. The Hellenic Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (HCDCP) is one of the major public health stakeholders in Greece, whose principal goal is the protection of the population's health and the prevention of infectious and chronic diseases.

262. Regarding HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) HCDCP collaborates with the Ministry of Health and NGOs, to implement the National HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) Action Plan for the period 2008-2012, posted at the Ministry's website.

263. In 2011, an unprecedented upwards shift in the number of reported HIV infections among Injecting Drug Users (IDUs) was observed. In particular, the number of HIV diagnoses in IDUs in 2011 was 15 times higher than the corresponding number for 2010 comprising approximately 25% of the total HIV reports in 2011.

264. Information on the number of HIV/AIDS diagnoses and deaths is collected regularly through the compulsory HIV/AIDS reporting system by the Office for HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections. The data are analyzed and disseminated to the scientific audience and the general public. They are also submitted to the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) on an annual basis.

265. Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs): the main aims and challenges for STIs in 2012 include the improvement of partner notification services and reference laboratory services, the implementation of the proposed European response plan to multi-drug resistant gonorrhea, and the participation in European projects such as the chlamydia control project and the antenatal screening services.

266. In relation to HIV/AIDS and STIs, the prevention measures generally contain actions focusing on prevention within the general population, women, young persons aged 15-24 years, homosexual/bisexual men, prostitutes, IDUs, migrants residing in detention and reception centers as well as in the community, asylum seekers and refugees. Additionally, HIV/AIDS prevention strategies include actions to prevent contamination from mother to child.

267. The alliance of the ESTHER European partners is a collaboration of Governments, favoring the networking of health professionals and associations from the European region. Greece is represented in the network by HCDCP. Since 2011, all medical and educational facilities of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa are at the disposal of HCDCP as part of the Greek contribution to the ESTHER alliance.

268. The Office for Viral Hepatitis undertakes activities to prevent Viral Hepatitis and has intensified its efforts to inform the public, the health workers and the high risk groups. Vaccinations against hepatitis B have been intensified within the framework of the National Vaccination Plan as of 1/1/1998. Pursuant to this provision, the vaccination is compulsory and concerns all babies and children who become adolescents (6<sup>th</sup> grade of the elementary school). Hepatitis A has also been included in the National Vaccination Plan as of 23/1/2008. Vaccinations against Hep B and Hep A are also recommended in high-risk groups.

269. From 2002 to date, the Cohort Chronic Hepatitis B & C study of the National Hepatitis Plan of KEELPNO has been implemented and coordinated (recording-monitoring-statistical processing of data) aiming at the continuous monitoring of the history of patients suffering from Chronic Hepatitis B & C.

270. In March 2011, under the responsibility and coordination of HCDCP, the EU co-funded Migrant Health Care (MHC) project "Implementation of Health Care and Psychosocial Support Activities for Third Country Nationals that may require international protection in the area of Evros-Greece" was initiated and is currently operational. The number of migrants screened at the health stations reaches 1,000-2,000 per month, varying according to the season of influx. During their detention, besides the medical screening, blood screening for infectious diseases is performed upon consent. Vaccination records are being sought and when appropriate, adult migrants are vaccinated against Poliomyelitis; a number of children are vaccinated against Diphtheria/Tetanus/ Pertussis, Poliomyelitis and Measles/Mumps/Rubella. Mantoux tests (Tuberculin Skin Tests) are also performed.

271. Since the initiation of the project, approximately 60% of migrants sought medical care within the detention centers and 0,01% had medical conditions which required further hospitalization.

272. Additionally, a team of medical and psychosocial workers from the office of Migrant and Mobile Populations' Health performs medical and psychological screening to migrants seeking for asylum, who visit the Aliens Division of Attica. During the first six months of operation of this project (between July and November 2011), 1289 migrants/asylum seekers were evaluated for medical and psychiatric conditions and 16 (0.012%) were referred for further specialized care.

273. In general, migrant populations are in a satisfactory general condition (the "healthy migrant effect") upon arrival to host countries. Undocumented migrants though, are special populations subjected to various health threats. After their entry to our country, they're usually directed to the centre of Athens, where an increasing number of IDUs, in addition to the already increased illegal prostitution, is observed.

274. The rise of HIV incidence between IDUs in 2011, as well as the need for provision of medical attention to these socially excluded population groups, has led HCDCP to implement the program of "Mobile Health Units", which operates since June 2011. These health units provide primary medical care to migrants, IDUs, homeless and socially excluded individuals, perform voluntary screening tests for HIV and blood-borne infections, undertake psychosocial support and counseling, as well as vaccinations of children and adults. They also provide multilingual health information, health education and support, while they collaborate with other needle-exchange programs.

275. The ultimate objective of this project is the early detection and surveillance of communicable diseases. Until today the program has assisted more than 19,000 patients in the centre of Athens (78% migrants and 22% Greeks, 23% IDUs) and more than 1,000 voluntary blood tests for HIV and hepatitis viruses were performed.

276. In addition, HCDCP has implemented outreach programs for migrants and individuals involved in prostitution (men, women and transgender persons). The street-work program has approached more than 2,500 migrant shops in the center of Athens and Piraeus and 417 brothels (1,117 female sex workers and 372 male). The street work teams approach individuals in their own space, distributing condoms and educational material in several languages. The aim of the project is to promote condom use amongst sex workers, in order to reduce HIV/AIDS and STIs, as well as provide information about the availability of health and welfare services.

**(a) Medical care and psychosocial support of Roma populations**

277. During 2011, the project “Safeguarding the Promotion and the Psycho-social Support of the Greek Roma” continued to be implemented, according to which Mobile Health Units visit the settlements of various Roma populations. The above Project is implemented by the Ministry of Health and regional Directorates of Health, in collaboration with the Health Regional Systems, HCDCP and NGOs.

278. The purpose of these interventions is among others to examine and vaccinate Roma children, provide assistance with coping with social problems and record immunizations. Vaccinations follow the recommendations of the National Vaccination Plan.

279. To date, vaccinations have been performed to children in all settlements. The booster doses are usually provided by local authorities (e.g. health centres, prefectures, etc.), in cooperation with the coordinating Directorates of the MoH. In each intervention, the health records of children are updated or new ones are issued for newborns and/or children that have lost them.

280. In addition, the prefectures and HCDCP are responsible for maintaining medical and vaccination records. In 2011, a total of 305 vaccinations for poliomyelitis, tetanus, diphtheria, measles, mumps, rubella, varicella, hepatitis B and A, and haemophilus influenza b were realized, in accordance with the National Vaccination Plan.

**(b) Victims of Trafficking**

281. With regard to the victims of trafficking, an office for the study and fight against trafficking was established in HCDCP in 2008 and was functional until 2010. Since 2010, the activities of HCDCP regarding victims of trafficking are undertaken by the office of Migrant and Mobile Populations’ Health.

**6. Actions of the Organisation against Drugs (OKANA)**

282. Since 2010, OKANA has created twenty nine (29) new Substitution Units, as outpatients’ clinics, within public hospitals as it was provided by the ministerial decree (No 123148) issued on 2/12/2011 by the Minister of Health and Social Welfare. The total number of substitution units is now 54, whereas by the end of 2009 the total number was 24. OKANA’s substitution programme is addressed to opioid dependent persons over 20 years old and nowadays provides treatment services to 7.422 individuals all over the country. The number of treated patients has been increased by 56% since March 2010 (4.771 patients). The waiting list in March 2010 comprised 5.558 individuals, whereas now it comprises 3.048 individuals waiting for substitution treatment. The waiting list is mostly concentrated in Attica (2.761 individuals), where also 8 more units are foreseen according to the aforementioned decree. Extension of OKANA’s substitution network was achieved with the already existing human resources, since the state budget for OKANA has been substantially reduced during the last 2 years. Moreover, OKANA in cooperation with the local communities runs and supervises scientifically the Prevention Centres network (71 Prevention Centers) all over Greece.

## **7. Health Care**

283. Laws 3863/2010 and 3918/2011 promoted the consolidation, organization and functional integration of the system for the provision of Primary Health Care services. Specifically, an Inter-ministerial Coordination Committee has been established, responsible for developing an institutional framework for the Unified Health Care System, that will include all health units of the National Health System, as well as the relevant units which operated within social security agencies.

284. It has also been decided and initiated the establishment of EOPYY (National Organization for the Provision of Health Services) whose objective is, inter alia, the operational coordination and cooperation of agencies that constitute the network of Primary Health Care, the adoption of quality and effectiveness standards for the provision of health services, the management and control of funding, the establishment of criteria and conditions with regard to the conclusion of contracts with public bodies and the private sector, as well as with doctors etc. The EOPYY started operating on 1.1.2012.

## **8. Access to Health Services**

285. Responding to its obligations deriving from applicable international treaties on the access to health services of citizens, mainly persons belonging to vulnerable groups (both Greek and foreign nationals), Greece has laid down a number of relevant provisions, including the following:

- Law 2955/2001, article 11 (e): free hospital and medical care of foreign nationals – both documented and undocumented– who suffer from infectious diseases;
- Presidential Decree 220/2007, articles 8, 12 and 14: free hospital and medical care of asylum seekers and financially weak refugees;
- Joint Ministerial Decision (JMD) 139491/2006, setting out the requirements for the free hospital and medical care of Greek and foreign citizens. In particular:
  - Greek citizens who are not insured and are financially weak, according to the requirements mentioned in the JMD;
  - Citizens of EU member states who reside lawfully in the country and are in a weak financial condition or are uninsured;
  - Citizens of the State Parties to the European Social Charter, who live permanently and lawfully in the country and are in a weak financial condition or are uninsured.
- Aliens holding a residence permit for humanitarian reasons (health);
- Foreign spouses of Greek citizens or aliens of Greek descent or citizens of member-states of the EU, as well as their children, provided they live lawfully in the country and are in a weak financial condition or are uninsured;
- Persons granted refugee status or other status of international protection;
- Persons who have filed an asylum request, the examination of which is pending;
- Aliens who are victims of crimes related to trafficking in human beings and are not insured;
- Children living in child care institutions or in foster families;
- People attending programmes related to detoxification from drug addiction.

286. In addition, Presidential Decree 96/2008 ensures free access to health care to beneficiaries of international protection status (harmonization of the Greek legislation with the provisions of EU Council Directive 2004/83/EC of 29 April 2004).

## **9. Environment Hygiene**

287. To monitor the quality of drinkable water, a Joint Ministerial Decision on the “quality of water intended for human consumption” has been issued, in compliance with directive 98/83/EC of the European Council of 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1998, and is applied as subsequently amended in 2007; all controls prescribed therein are carried out by the competent authorities.

288. Sanitary Provisions have been issued in relation to the quality of bottled water, table water and natural mineral water, in compliance with relevant EU directives, as well as with regard to the operation of swimming pools and the safety of the swimmers.

289. In relation to sewerage, a Joint Ministerial Decision has harmonized Greek legislation with EU directive 91/271 EC concerning urban waste-water treatment, while legislation has been adopted on waste-waters and industrial waste disposal.

290. The Ministry of the Environment, Energy and Climate Change is responsible for the monitoring of air quality and the operation of the measurement network in accordance with Law 1650/1983. The same Ministry is responsible for the implementation of Law 3199/2003 and the relevant regulatory acts (Presidential Decrees and Joint Ministerial Decisions) on water pollution, as regards the monitoring of the quality of the surface and underground waters.

291. Regulations have also been issued on the protection of the population from radioactivity and a continuous monitoring and measurement of radioactivity is carried out; in association with the Greek Atomic Energy Committee, prescriptions have been issued on the conditions, the construction materials and the use of substances, devices or buildings where the actions relevant to the emission of the radioactive radiation are performed.

292. In general, the Ministry notifies instructions and relevant circulars on environmental health issues to the Health Directions of the Regions and the Prefectural Administrations, as well as to other competent bodies.

## **10. Operational Programmes**

293. The Special Agency of Health and Social Solidarity Sector has been assigned the management, monitoring and control of the implementation of the Operational Programme “*Health-Welfare*” 2000-2006, as well as the planning, coordination and management (Thematic Axis Priority 5 of the Sectoral Operational Programme “*Human Resource Development*”) of the projects/actions under the authority of the Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity that will be implemented in the context of the Operational Programmes of the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) 2007-2013.

294. As a result of the implementation of the said Operational Programme, the objectives set out have been accomplished to a large extent in the fields of: creation and modernization of health centers, upgrading of hospital capacity, training of health, public health and social care workers, improvements in the mental health sector, including through the establishment of Boarding Houses, operation of Social Supporting Services Offices, deinstitutionalization of persons with special needs, etc.

## Articles 13 and 14 – Right to education

295. Among other focal issues, the Greek education policy aims to a) ensure high-quality educational services that are accessible to all, b) cater for every child's specific educational needs, while respecting their diversity, and c) combat educational exclusion. The key-concepts and principles of intercultural and HR education underlie the general education policy and have, therefore, been included in the school curricula for primary and secondary education. School books have been and continue to be revised to reinforce understanding and respect for the different, to enhance interest in other people's beliefs, religion, way of living and thinking.

296. The three focal national projects: a) "Education of immigrant and repatriate students", b) "Education of the children of the Muslim minority in Thrace" and c) "Education of Roma children" continue to be implemented in the Greek educational system under the supervision of the Ministry of Education (since the school year 2010-2011), which in essence facilitates the work, sets the guidelines to the actions and controls the results.

### 1. The Education of the Muslim Minority students (paras. 28 and 50 of the Committee's concluding observations)

297. The Greek Government is firmly committed to continue its policy to uphold the right to education for the Muslim minority. The "Education of the Children of the Muslim Minority in Thrace" project is a policy of the Greek state for the Muslim minority in Thrace, already started in the 1990s, which is now running its fourth phase. Its basic aim is to upgrade the education of the children of the minority and to foster their integration into society as equal citizens of Greece and the European Union.

298. In accordance with the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, Greece guarantees the proper functioning of the existing minority schools, supported and funded by the State. Currently, there are 174 primary minority schools, 2 secondary and 2 Seminaries in Thrace. The majority of children of primary school age attend minority education that offers a bilingual programme by which both Greek and Turkish are used as languages of instruction but also constitute separate language subjects in the curriculum.

299. An increasing number of persons belonging to the Muslim minority in Thrace are showing a preference for the state mainstream educational system. The competent authorities have successfully accommodated this preference, while offering courses aimed at preserving the cultural and linguistic characteristics of persons belonging to the minority who attend mainstream schools.

300. In this direction, Turkish optional language courses have been introduced, as a pilot programme, in five state junior high schools in Thrace. At the same time, Greek language & civilization courses are available for Muslim parents. This two-tier approach has proven useful to both students and parents who are members of the Muslim minority.

301. Almost all students complete the elementary education programme while the number of minority students attending secondary school has significantly increased in the last 10 years. About one quarter attend a school exclusively for the minority (minority high school or seminary), while three quarters of students are in public mainstream schools. Despite the improvement observed, until recently there were frequent grade repetitions or dropouts. A basic aim of the programme for the "Education of the Children of the Muslim Minority in Thrace" is to support the said children in order to accomplish systematic improvement of their school performance that will lead to reduction of drop-out rates, as well as to enhance successful school attendance in Senior High School with the overall aim to reach the national mean and, consequently, increase university entrance.

302. Since academic year 2006-2007, a 0.5% quota for the admission to Universities and Higher Technical Educational Institutes of students who are members of the Muslim minority in Thrace has been introduced. The obvious advantage of this measure is the promotion of the acquisition of higher academic and professional qualification of the persons belonging to the Muslim minority in Thrace in an effective and inclusive way as well as their improved access to the job market.

**2. The Education of the Greek Roma students (paras. 28 and 50 of the Committee's concluding observations)**

303. Roma children education constitutes a central objective of the Greek education policy. Although Roma children are entitled by law to the same schooling as all other Greek citizens, the Ministry of Education has been applying special projects and actions considering the special needs of the Roma population and the prejudice that Roma children might face during their education.

304. The main axes of the Greek Ministry of Education policy for Roma education are reflected in the project "Education of Roma children". On the one hand, the project aims to enhance access and participation of Roma children in education, with particular emphasis on preschool education and early enrollment in the 1<sup>st</sup> grade of primary school. On the other hand, emphasis is placed on in-school interventions for the improvement of the education provided to Roma children in order to achieve regular attendance and to reduce students' dropping out of school.

305. Throughout the implementation of the project, special priority is to be given to the role and action of Roma school mediators. The Ministry of Education has set as a goal the training of Roma school mediators and believes that there should be networking between them and Roma mediators who are active at a local level in the areas of health issues and employment. The aim is to effect a comprehensive and all-encompassing approach towards the problems affecting the population while securing the viability of spatially targeted interventions through the interconnection of mediators per region and the local services and agencies that are active to this end.

306. What is more, since 2008, at the beginning of every school year, the Greek Ministry of Education issues a Circular according to which all Heads of School Units are reminded of their obligation to enroll Roma pupils in Primary Schools and cooperate with the Regional Directors of Primary and Secondary Education as well as with School Advisors in order to overcome any problems that may arise during enrolment.

307. In addition, Roma families with low income can benefit from an annual allowance for every child enrolled in public school of compulsory education which can be granted to them only at the end of each school year, upon submission of a certificate of regular school attendance.

**3. Educational Priority Zones**

308. In 2010, the Ministry of Education introduced a new measure, the Educational Priority Zones (ZEP), which is expected to contribute positively to combating segregation and its consequent effects in certain schools. The general aim behind the implementation of ZEP is to shape, and to test under real classroom conditions, alternative and flexible educational approaches of differentiated teaching so as to ensure the equitable educational integration of students from areas with low education and socioeconomic indicators, and possibly remove the social and economic barriers to students' progress.

309. The Educational Priority Zones action is implemented in geographical regions where the basic school integration indicators are low. The said Zones enhance a holistic approach regarding the education process which transcends the typical teaching and learning in-

school processes and aims to connect school units with local social agents through the implementation of educational, social and cultural actions. One of the actions through which the educational support offered to students will be implemented is that of support from specialized staff (psychologists, social workers) to monitor special cases and resolve potential problematic situations.

310. In the current academic year, 377 ZEP Reception Classes operate in primary state schools throughout Greece whereas in secondary education 76 ZEP Reception Classes run in state schools.

#### **4. Special Education**

311. In 2008 Law 3699 on “Special Education of Persons with Disabilities or Special Educational Needs” was enacted. The said law updated, codified and supplemented prior legislation. It was the first time that the compulsory nature of Special Education was enshrined in law. Law 3299 stipulated that Special Education is an integral part of compulsory and free public education and specified the minimum duration thereof, promoting meaningful and functional support for inclusive education. Measures for ‘early intervention’ have been introduced for children of pre-school age. The right of academically gifted and talented pupils for special education services was recognized for the first time.

312. Furthermore, the said law established differential diagnosis and laid down the respective procedures and bodies for the diagnosis of special educational needs, – mainly the Differential Diagnosis, Diagnosis and Special Education Requirements Support Centres (KEDDY) – and outlined their recruiting, operation and responsibilities.

#### **5. Network against Violence in Schools**

313. The Greek Ministry of Education is one of the founding members of the Network against Violence in Schools which was set up in 2010 under the initiative of the Association for the Psychosocial Health of Children and Adolescents (A.P.H.C.A.) in Greece. The creation of the network was deemed necessary since there is a need for prevention and early intervention on bullying at schools. Some of the actions in this direction include: the operation of telephone counselling line for teachers and parents’ support, the operation of a mobile intervention unit in cases of violence and intimidation, and the online counselling support service for teachers, children, adolescents, students and young people.

#### **6. Prevention and Combating of Corporal Punishment of Children**

314. In Greek schools Law does not allow corporal punishment while other means are suggested for promoting good conduct of students within the school environment. Additionally, (Article 4 of) the Law (3500/2006) “for dealing with domestic violence” makes clear that “corporal punishment is not allowed in the framework of raising and educating children”.

315. The Greek Ministry of Education is a founding member of the Network for the Prevention and Combating of Corporal Punishment of Children. It works towards the elimination of any vestiges of physical punishment of children in Greece and its rationale is that children should be raised by means of dialogue and participation as well as by means of methods which accord with the principles of contemporary pedagogical sciences.

316. On May 2011, the Network organized an open discussion at the premises of Ministry of Education. Its subject was “How can we help parents raise their children without violence?” and aimed at involving all competent bodies, as well as those working with and for children in a fruitful discussion about positive parental role.



## **Article 15 – Right to take part in cultural life**

### **1. Availability of funds**

317. The tables contained in Annex 9 present the expenditure of the (then) Ministry of Culture for the development and support in different sectors for the years 2004-2008.

### **2. Developments in Institutional Infrastructure**

318. The National Book Centre of Greece (EKEBI), a private non-profit legal entity established in 1994 by the (then) Ministry of Culture, has been implementing actions on education for children and adults and plays an important role in fostering participation in cultural life in remote parts of Greece, through the creation of book groups and the promotion of cultural heritage and contemporary culture.

319. The National Centre for the Theatre and Dance is a private legal entity, supervised by the (then) Ministry of Culture, according to Law No.3565/2007. The main purposes of the Centre are the implementation of national policy in relation to the theatre and dance and the provision of support to the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, Culture and Sports (hereafter: the Ministry), while specifying and planning such a policy.

### **3. Developments in the Museum field**

320. In 2007, the construction of the New Acropolis Museum was completed. The organization of its permanent exhibitions has already been launched and the Museum was officially inaugurated on June 20<sup>th</sup> 2009.

321. Since 2000, 26 archaeological museums and 15 archaeological collections or/and permanent exhibitions were inaugurated. During the abovementioned period, procedures of re-exhibition carried out in 39 archaeological museums and in 3 archaeological collections.

322. An Office for the project of Unification of the Archaeological Sites of Athens has been established, which is responsible for the coordination and monitoring of the project for the overall presentation of important archaeological sites.

323. The Melina Merkouri Foundation was established for promoting the creation of the Acropolis Museum and the return of the Parthenon Marbles.

### **4. Matters of protection of the Greek Roma**

324. For the protection and presentation of local cultures and cultural diversity, the Ministry has been implementing and coordinating research and educational projects since 1999 for the Greek Roma. These projects aim at studying and presenting the rich Roma cultural heritage, as well as the acquaintance and approach of Roma with the broader society. A number of activities have been implemented from 1999 to 2008.

### **5. Special educational programmes organized and addressed to young people with special needs (vision, hearing, mobility)**

325. The Department of Educational Programmes of the Ministry adapts existing actions or plans new ones according to the special needs of the public. Special educational programmes have been designed for archaeological-educational exhibitions.

326. The Educational Programs and Communication Department of the Directorate of Museums, Exhibitions and Educational Programs of the Ministry realize educational activities addressed to children with disabilities. Every educational program designed by the Department can be implemented to groups of children according to their special needs.

327. In 2003, European Year of People with Disabilities, the Ministry drew up and implemented a National Action Plan on the occasion of the 2004 Paralympic Games.

328. In 2006-2007 the educational program titled "Invitation to a supper on the ancient Agora of Athens" which was designed by the Educational Programs and Communication Department in the framework of the celebrations of European Days of Cultural Heritage 2005-2006 was implemented with great success to children of primary education with vision impairment and to children of secondary education with mobility problems.

#### **6. Care and Protection of persons with special needs and disabilities**

329. The Ministry has elaborated a detailed plan of guidelines and projects to secure access of persons with special needs and disabilities to cultural sites and museums. EKEBI's website makes provision for persons with special needs.

#### **7. Protection of Cultural Heritage**

330. Law No. 3028/28.7.2002 for the Protection of Antiquities and in general of the Cultural Heritage of Greece embodies the principles and rules of international law relating to the treatment of cultural assets, as well as the modern concepts concerning the awareness of citizens for cultural heritage, easy access, and communication of the public therewith. Additionally, Law No.3658/2008 "Measures for the Protection of Cultural Goods and other provisions" establishes, within the framework of the Directorate General of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage of the Ministry, a new Directorate for the Documentation and Protection of Cultural Goods. The creation of this new Directorate aims at reinforcing the existing protective framework regarding cultural goods, through the establishment of a specialised body dedicated to the investigation, documentation of the provenance and claiming of cultural goods, which are subject to theft, illicit excavation or salvage and illicit trafficking in Greece or abroad. Law No. 3658/2008 also provides for sanctions on those who possess, import or export counterfeit objects intending to trade them as original.

331. Greece has also ratified the major International Conventions on cultural heritage.

#### **8. Role of mass media and communications media in promoting participation in cultural life**

332. A series of legislative and administrative measures initiated by the former Ministry of Press and Mass Media (now: Secretariat General of Information - Secretariat General of Communication ) have been put into effect to support the role of mass and communications media towards promoting participation in social and cultural life.

333. In addition to the legislative texts mentioned in Greece's initial report, Law 3592/2007 (article 6) provides that television networks and radio stations should include in their programming: a daily news broadcast in Sign Language with subtitles (at least 7 minutes long) and weekly programmes with subtitles (minimum a total of 4 hours). Privately owned media are encouraged, through a positive point-system in broadcast licensing, to include programmes accessible to people with disabilities.

334. Since 2006, the Secretariat General of Information - Secretariat General of Communication (SGC-SGI) has undertaken various projects in order to highlight the issues concerning people with disabilities and mass media: accessibility, participation, and their portrayal in mass media.

#### **9. Television and radio**

335. ERT S.A. (Greek public television) undertakes significant, socially-oriented initiatives, including raising awareness among the people and the social bodies in favour of

those in need, as well as activities for offering assistance to those stricken by natural disasters through raising money, goods or medicine. To implement such activities, ERT has set up a crisis management mechanism built upon ERT's Citizen's Communication Centre (K.E.E.P.) and the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) group.

336. Within the context of a cooperation framework with Hellenic Non-Governmental and Non-Profit organizations, ERT S.A. has assumed the role of communications sponsor to support, highlight and promote their mission at all levels of the Greek society. In order to achieve this goal ERT S.A. has placed particular emphasis on the news coverage of NGOs' activities (environmental, humanitarian, social, human rights), as well as spreading their social messages (spots).

337. ERT strives to promote human rights in Greek society in general and the rights of persons with disabilities and socially sensitive groups, (drug addicts, homeless etc), in particular, as well as the idea of cultural diversity against any form of racism.

#### **10. Preservation and presentation of humanity's cultural heritage**

338. The Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, Culture and Sports, in the framework of promoting the protection of the cultural heritage of humanity, had declared and included in the World Heritage List of UNESCO a number of Greek monuments as Monuments of World Heritage. The Directorate of Monument Archives keeps a documented file on the monuments since the establishment of the Greek State.

339. Among the relevant initiatives in this field, the following should be mentioned: European Heritage Label, European Program for the Preventive Archaeology, European Program Mediterranean Gothic (2004-2007), Network HEREIN (European Heritage Net), "Cultural Egnatia" (enhancement of monuments in the regions of Epirus, Macedonia, Thrace in Greece), ARCHIMED, Egeria, Calendar edition about the Byzantine and Post-Byzantine monuments of Global Heritage (2008), edition of a volume entitled "The Ottoman Architecture in Greece", Programming Conventions on the conservation and enhancement of the old city in different Municipalities, etc.

#### **11. Other measures for the conservation, development and diffusion of culture**

340. Within the framework of copyright protection, the Hellenic Copyright Organization (OPI) supervises the operation of the system for protecting the authors and the related right holders; safeguards the rights of the users and the public; balances the interests of copyright sectors with those of industrial property sectors; incorporates and adjusts in Greece the latest evolutions at community and international level, contributing in this way to the promotion of creativity and culture.

341. The relevant Greek legislation reflects all modern trends expressed in the national legislations of mainly European States, and its law has been harmonized with EU Directives. Moreover, Greece has ratified almost all international conventions, particularly the five main conventions providing for international protection.

342. Recently OPI has prepared a ministerial decision, on the Reproduction of copyrighted work for the benefit of the blind and the deaf-mute and extension of the arrangement to other categories of persons with disabilities.

#### **12. Steps and measures taken to assure the conservation, development and dissemination of science and culture**

343. The Greek Cultural Heritage Promotion and Dissemination Society, finances a very wide range of actions to promote and present Greek culture in Greece and abroad, as well as the message of peace, conciliation, and noble competition between creators or new

scientists. Additionally, Law 3525/2007 on the Cultural Sponsorship, offers moral rewards and incentives in order to encourage potential sponsors.

**13. Other practical measures**

344. Through membership in the competent bodies of international organizations (European Union, UNESCO, Council of Europe, International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property, International Council of Museums, International Council on Museums and Sites) and of regional cooperation (Euro-Mediterranean Barcelona Process, Adriatic and Ionian Initiative, Council of Ministers of Culture of South East Europe, Black Sea Economic Cooperation, Summit of the Head of States of South East Europe, Annual Ministerial Conference on Cultural Heritage on the topic “Cultural Heritage-a Bridge towards a Shared Future”), the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, Culture and Sports participates in multilateral cultural programmes and develops international and regional cooperation and dialogue, which reinforce exchanges in every cultural sector. Through such cooperation, it encourages cultural bodies and private citizens to participate in the international cultural life.

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